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EVENINGS WITH THE SKEPTICS

OR

FREE DISCUSSION ON FREE THINKERS

BY

JOHN OWEN

RECTOR OF EAST ANSTEY, DEVON

'Believe it, my good friend, to love Truth for Truth's sake is the principal part of human perfection in this world, and the seed-plot of all other virtues'—LOCKE

VOL. II.

CHRISTIAN SKEPTICISM

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EVENINGS WITH THE SKEPTICS.

EVENING VI.

TWOFOLD TRUTH.

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'Einheit war das Wesen des Klassischen Heidenthums; Dualismus, Zweispalt, ist das Wesen des Klassischen Christenthums.'—Feuerbach: *Pierre Bayle*, p. 9, *Werke*, vol. vi.

'Die Scholastiker . . . hatten hingegen der Religion nicht bloss die Suprematie über die Philosophie eingeräumt, sondern auch diese letztere für ein nichtiges Spiel, für eitel Wortfechterei erklärt, sobald sie mit den Dogmen der Religion in Widerspruch gerieth.'—Heine, *Ueber Deutschland*, *Werke*, v. p. 109.

'Les uns disent que non, les autres disent que oui; et moi, je dis que oui et non.'—Molière, *Le Médecin malgré Lui*.

'Il y a donc un grand nombre de Vérités, et de Foi et de Morale, qui semblent répugnantes et qui subsistent toutes dans un ordre admirable.'—Pascal: *Penseés*, Ed. Faugère, i. p. 322.

'Now, that a man cannot command his own understanding, or positively determine to-day what opinion he will be of to-morrow, is evident from experience and the nature of the understanding, which cannot more apprehend things otherwise than they appear to it than the eye see other colours in the rainbow than it doth, whether those colours be really there or no.'—Locke: *On Toleration*, *Fox-Bourne's Life*, i. p. 176.

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EVENING VI.

TWOFOLD TRUTH.

TREVOR. Our subject to-night is a cabalistic one—we have to investigate the mysterious properties of the number two.

MISS LEYCESTER. I never knew that two had any mysterious properties: I thought these were confined to the sacred numerals three and seven.

TREVOR. For that matter every number has its own secret and profound mysteries. Consider a moment, and you will see the reason of it. Number itself in its final analysis is just as inscrutable as space and time, of both of which, in fact, it is the outward calculable expression. Pythagoras, you know, resolved the universe into numbers. Without going quite so far, you must acknowledge that the world around us has a strange affinity for numbers; for what is there existing or conceivable which cannot be brought under the noble science of computation? Are there not so many planets with so many satellites? so many kings of England and popes of Rome? Has not a quadruped the exact number of four legs, neither more nor less, strange as it may seem? And with regard to man, what would he be without number? Arithmetic is the very test of civilization. Savage races have no numbers, or at least only very few, and the increase in their numerical capacities gives the measure of their general intellectual progress. Imagine existence devoid of arithmetic! It would be only a kind of annihilation. What has a more potent influence over every unit of collective humanity than 'number one'? What care is lavished on it! What expense laid out on it! What virtue ascribed to it! How much is it exalted and extolled, so that every other

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existing thing, nay, every other human unit, is made subservient and secondary to its projects, its interests, and its wishes! As to number two, the subject of our discussion this evening, you will readily understand its importance to man. Is not man a biped? Has he not two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, two hands, right and left sides, besides other dual attributes too numerous to mention? If you would learn the wonderful qualities of number two, you must look into my friend Sextos Empeirikos,[1] to whom the binary number, with its inherent properties, its infinite possibilities of subdivision, and the mutual opposition of the units of which it is composed, offers unlimited scope for Skepticism. Indeed, the uncertainty pertaining to number two weighed heavily upon the great mind of Sokrates himself, so much so that he infers from the antagonism of its component units the non-existence as demonstrable fact of all number[2] —one unit annihilating the other, after the manner of the famous Kilkenny cats. In the 'Occult Philosophy' of Cornelius Agrippa[3] also, as in most works of the same kind, you have a whole chapter on the properties of the dual number. *E.g.*: it is the first plural composed not of numbers but of units; it is the number of equality, of justice, of the balance, of charity, of love, of marriage. *Per contra*, it is the principle of division, discord, disintegration, and confusion, and so on for nearly two pages of dualisms, some of them obvious enough, while others are well worthy of a place in a philosophy that claims to be occult. Our concernment with it to-night is not as the type of union but of disunion, for we have to consider the possibility of the existence of double or twofold truth. We have to ask, in other words, whether what is demonstrably true in one subject or from one point of view can be false in another or from a different standpoint. Can, *e.g.* the truth which is true in philosophy be false in theology, or *vice versa*?

MRS. HARRINGTON. For myself, I should say, 'Certainly

[1] *Adv. Math.* lib. iv. § 21; *Op. Om.* ed. Fabricius, vol. ii. p. 204.

[2] Plato, *Phaidon*, Steph. 97, Jowett's trans. vol. i. p. 446.

[3] *Op. Om.* vol. i. pp. 127, 128; comp. Giord. Bruno, *Cena de le Ceneri*, *Op. Ital.* i. p. 124.

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not;' but why should we have to decide such a profound question?

TREVOR. For this reason. 'Twofold truth' is that particular phase of Skepticism which is called forth as at least a possible contingency by the fact of an external authoritative Revelation: and as we are about to consider the operation of Free-thought in relation to Christianity, it is important we should determine how far it is right or possible for Christian philosophers, if so minded, to divide their allegiance between, *e.g.* the claims of reason and the dictates of faith. Just to give you an instance of the practical operation of twofold truth, we shall among our Skeptics come across an Italian Free-thinker, Pomponazzi, who declared that he believed the doctrine of immortality as a Christian, but as a philosopher he did not believe it.

MISS LEYCESTER. That is what they call in Germany 'double book-keeping,' or 'book-keeping by double entry,'[1] not very happily though, where one entry is the precise opposite to the other, the figures, *e.g.* in the right-hand column being all erased in the left.

ARUNDEL. The 'double entry' that should truly represent the duplicity of twofold truth would be the false balance sheets of some rotten concern, or the 'cooked' accounts of a defalcating secretary.

TREVOR. I don't agree with you, Arundel. In the cases you mention there is a distinctly dishonest intention. I think we shall find, after an investigation of twofold truth, that whatever difficulties, intellectual and moral, it may imply to others, it has been maintained conscientiously by thinkers of no small power. Dimly traceable in Greek thought whenever the conclusions of the philosopher collided with dominant popular convictions especially of a religious kind, it is very distinctly marked in the more profound of the Christian Fathers and Schoolmen. The principle was involved in every impartial attempt to reconcile the wisdom of Christianity with that of Pagandom. It came to maturity in France and Italy during the Renaissance movements in

[1] Doppelte Buchführung.' Cf. Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus*, i. p. 181.

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those countries in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. But as a general rule it is a principle that has acquired prominency in every age of religious controversy, and may therefore be said to be incident as of right to every authoritative creed that has ever been controverted.

ARUNDEL. With the exception, I suppose, of Protestantism. A creed that lays such stress on human reason ought not to want a point of convergence and of unity for varying truth, or rather for varying aspects of the same truth.

TREVOR. But you forget the other element of Protestantism, the position which Scripture held in its original conception. The dualism originally existing between human reason and ecclesiasticism only took a new form. It became Reason *v.* Scripture. Luther himself was a decided upholder of 'twofold truth,' maintaining that what was true in theology was not always true in philosophy,[1] though his object was not to assert the coequal authority of the two principles as much as to subordinate reason to faith by the process of 'Divide et impera.'

HARRINGTON. Well, you need not go back so far as Luther to find Protestant defenders of 'twofold truth.' On the Continent you have Lessing and Kant as propounders of the doctrine, while in England, passing over other instances, 'twofold truth' was preached only a few years ago from the pulpit of our greatest university by a Bampton Lecturer. Astounding as it may seem, the preacher deliberately maintained that faith and reason were two different territories, each with its own boundary, laws, and government, and were of necessity engaged in internecine strife—a pretty prospect for poor speculating humanity!

MISS LEYCESTER. Yes, but you forget, Charles, that 'double truth,' in relation to Christianity, is not a principle of hostility, but of conciliation. It is put forward as a kind of intellectual 'peace at any price.' Reason has her claims

[1] Comp. *Luther's Theologie*, von Julius Kostlin, vol. ii. pp. 290, 291; Sainte's *Hist. Crit. du Rationalisme*, p. 29; Zeller, *Gesch. der Deutsch. Phil.* p. 29. And on the general position of the Reformers on this point comp. Renan and Le Clerc, *Hist. Litt. de la France au 14^me^ Siècle*, vol. i. pp. 375, 376.

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conceded, so also has Revelation, each is awarded its own particular territory, each is forbidden to cross or appropriate that of the other—no doubt an impossible condition when the territory to which both lay claim is to a great extent the same. . . . It has always seemed to me that the distinction sometimes made between the oneness of the Greek and the essential duality of Christian philosophy might be represented by the difference between a circle and an ellipse. The first has a single focus, viz. reason. The second has double foci, *i.e.* Reason and Revelation. The further apart the foci, the more oblong and irregular the ellipse. The closer they approximate, the nearer does the figure attain the perfection of a circle.

ARUNDEL. The main objection to your illustration is that it merges Revelation in Reason, and so far tends to make it unnecessary. A better illustration to my mind would be this: reason and faith starting from divergent directions are originally like two circles on the same plane, which only touch each other at one point of the two circumferences, but gradually, by mutually yielding each to the other, they are so brought together as to represent two distinct half-circles possessing a common centre, as Dr. Donne says [1]:—

> For reason, put to her best extension,
> Almost meets faith and makes both centres one.

HARRINGTON. I do not think your illustration as good as Florence's. It assumes that the respective limits of faith and reason are capable of distinct visible demarcation, which I humbly submit they are not. Reason has her functions in matters of faith, and Faith her office in matters of reason. Indeed, it is only because their limits are thus largely conterminous that you are at liberty to postulate the oneness of truth. Once grant that their powers and objects are distinct and separable, and you introduce a dichotomy into human faculties which would soon make twofoldness and antagonism prime characteristics of truth.

MRS. HARRINGTON. But does not the man of science escape the dilemma involved in 'double truth'? He has

[1] Lines on the Death of Prince Henry.

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only to determine the facts and processes of nature a experiment reveals them to him, and he is not obliged to reconcile his discoveries with foregone conclusions or hypotheses of any kind.

TREVOR. Not so, Mrs. Harrington. Science just as much as theology or philosophy is largely made up of hypotheses, any one of which may at any moment turn out questionable, if not demonstrably false, and so involve the inquirer in self-antagonism or 'twofold truth.' Besides which, men of science are not free from the emotional, sympathetic, and ideal wants of humanity. They are also placed in the midst of an objective environment of which they must needs take some account, especially in its religious aspect. For these reasons twofold truth is just as common among men of science as among philosophers and theologians. A striking instance of this you have in Michael Faraday, who persistently refused even to attempt the unification of his religious and scientific standpoints. Let me read you his remarkable words on this subject: 'I do not think it at all necessary to tie the study of the natural sciences and religion together; and in my intercourse with my fellow-creatures that which is religious and that which is philosophical have ever been two distinct things.'[1] From a similar conviction of the incompatibility of the philosophical and popular religious standpoints Buffon defended esoteric and exoteric teaching—another form in this instance of twofold truth; while David Hume, ranking him among men of science, though he denied that the historical veracity of miracles could be demonstrated, thought that they might be believed as articles of faith.

ARUNDEL. Do I understand you to say that esoteric and exoteric teaching involve an admission of double truth? If so, I think you are mistaken. 'Twofold truth' presupposes a condition of irreconcilable hostility. The contradictories are opposed in kind, whereas the differences between exo- and esoteric teaching are differences in degree. You would not say that the professor of high mathematics who also taught the elementary rules of arithmetic was a maintainer of 'twofold truths,' even though it might be true that the

[1] Tyndall's *Fragments of Science*, p. 369.

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principles to which he appealed were divergent in the two cases.

TREVOR. No, I should not, if the difference were of degree and not of kind. But it appears to me that the distinction is generally of the latter description. Esoteric teaching is put forward as not only higher than, but irreconcilable with, exoteric. It was so in the case of Pomponazzi and other defenders of twofold truth. It was so in the case of Buffon. It is so in the case of scientists among ourselves, who discern no middle point between science and religion, and yet hold both to one and to the other. It is so also in the casuistical ratiocination of the Jesuits. Indeed, I should not hesitate to state it as a general rule, that wherever the distinction between esoteric and exoteric doctrine is strongly emphasized, a leaning to 'twofold truth' may be fairly suspected.

MISS LEYCESTER. Among learned professions I suppose lawyers and judges have the strongest leaning to 'twofold truths.' Their calling is so entirely taken up with examining the opposing claims of rival parties that their minds must acquire a tendency to chronic equilibrium, *i.e.* holding every issue in suspense until they hear the opposite sides fully argued. In view of the curious decisions one sometimes hears, one wonders whether judges themselves re-try in the secret tribunal of their own minds the causes on which they have pronounced their decisions.

HARRINGTON. I suspect judges have little time and less inclination for such extra-judicial and nugatory employment. *Prima facie*, no doubt, the judicial faculty has in it much that is suspicious and Skeptical, though the incertitude that comes from the perpetual balancing of conflicting evidence is corrected in a great measure by the necessity of a definite decision on its merits. Still I agree with Florence. I think lawyers and judges are as a class more Skeptical than others. Such, at least, is my own experience. At the same time, I never knew a case of professional indecision quite so helpless as the instance quoted by Hazlitt[1] from Abraham Tucker. The latter writer used to relate of a friend of his, an old special pleader, that once coming out of his chambers

[1] *Table Talk*, vol. i. p. 238.

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in the Temple to take a walk with him he hesitated at the bottom of the stairs which way to go, proposed different directions—to Charing Cross, to St. Paul's—found some objection to them all, and at last turned back for want of a casting motive to incline the scale. Tucker gives this as an example of that temper of mind which, having been long used to weigh the reasons for things with scrupulous exactness, could not come to any conclusion at all on the spur of the moment. On the other hand, we must recollect that the incertitude of lawyers and judges is generally confined to the exercise of their profession, and that in matters outside of it they are often as confiding and dogmatic as the rest of the world. Lord Eldon's perpetual 'I doubt' grew to be a standing joke; but his lordship's constitutional wariness in professional matters did not prevent his being an extreme bigot and dogmatic in politics and religion.

MISS LEYCESTER. We touched slightly a point in our Sokrates discussion which appears more appropriate to our present subject of 'twofold truth,' *i.e.* the relation of irony to intellectual dualism or Skepticism. Irony seems the fit and proper method of expressing cautiously and reservedly dual-truth. Itself a method of speech, of which the overt signification is not only separable from but opposed to its real intentional meaning, it is eminently adapted to suggest twofold truth, while it has a further cause of duality as representing the antagonism so often existing between the independent thinker and his surroundings, social, philosophical, and religious. That, I suppose, is the reason why irony has been so generally employed by Neologian teachers from Sokrates downwards. Indeed, I have sometimes thought it a characteristic of all teachers of new and unpopular truth.

TREVOR. The question of the relation of literary style and method to intellectual idiosyncrasy and position is an interesting one, which has, so far as I know, never been discussed; but I quite agree with you that irony is frequently a characteristic of new thought. Assailing old beliefs, the new teacher seems compelled to employ defensive armour while making his attack. . . . By the way, here are some admirable remarks of Bishop Thirlwall on the relation of

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irony to the employment of judicial functions or discrimination between rival truths: 'There is always a slight cast of irony in the grave, calm, respectful attention impartially bestowed by an intelligent judge on two contending parties who are pleading their causes before him with all the earnestness of deep conviction and excited feeling. What makes the contrast interesting is that the right and the truth lie on neither side exclusively; that there is no fraudulent purpose, no gross imbecility of intellect on either, but both have plausible claims and specious reasons to allege, though each is too much blinded by prejudice or passion to do justice to the views of its adversary. For here the irony lies not in the demeanour of the judge, but is deeply seated in the case itself, which seems to favour each of the litigants, but really eludes them both. And this, too, it is that lends the highest degree of interest to the conflicts of religious and political parties.'[1] Thus, according to this profound thinker—himself one of the greatest masters of irony of our time—the ironical mode of presentation belongs essentially to twofold truth.

HARRINGTON. I should put the fact somewhat differently. Twofold truth is only an extreme, and to my mind not very inviting, form of the general method of thought which we call Skeptical. Now I quite think that there is a general affinity between the Skeptical method and the ironical expression of thought. I don't attempt to account for it psychologically, but an induction of Skeptics and their literary weapons tends to show a predilection to irony. Thus Sokrates was a Skeptic, at war with the convictions of his country, and one of the most noteworthy features of his intellect is his large employment of irony. Pomponazzi is a decided upholder of twofold truth, and his irony was of a peculiarly bitter and trenchant description. Erasmus was, as regards Romanism, a religious Skeptic, and his delicate and subtle irony is one of the most marked features of his style. So also, coming home to our own country, Hallam, George Cornewall Lewis, and Thirlwall were historical Skeptics, and they largely employed irony. Swift, Sterne, and Thackeray

[1] Thirlwall's *Remains*, vol. iii. p. 8.

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were social Skeptics, and irony is conspicuous in their writings.

ARUNDEL. Well, I can suggest, as against Miss Leycester's notion, one case of a religious teacher—indeed the greatest—in whose sayings no irony is perceivable—I mean Jesus Christ.

HARRINGTON. Do not be too sure of that, Arundel. I have always thought that there is a considerable amount of irony in the teaching of Christ. In the indirect method of the parables you have a kind of irony; while the defence of that mode of popular instruction, 'That seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand,' is emphatically ironical. So also, I take it, is the injunction to festive preparations for fastings, 'Anoint thine head and wash thy face.' His invective against the Pharisees is also occasionally marked by both irony and sarcasm. I forbear to notice other instances from a fear of trespassing on sacred ground.

MISS LEYCESTER. You have not noticed the example which Robertson of Brighton was accustomed to adduce—I mean the passage, '*Full well* ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition'[1]—where you have the ironic dualism distinctly marked, viz.: 1. Jewish infidelity considered as a reproach; 2. The same thing regarded as an object of mock congratulation on account of its complete success.

HARRINGTON. Very true, that striking instance escaped me; . . . but, as a general rule, I agree with Arundel so far that I think irony somewhat rare in Semiticism. It is a plant of robust habit, such as will only thrive in certain strong soils. The Semitic intellect was neither sufficiently vigorous, independent, and recalcitrant, nor comprehensive and many-sided enough to allow of much development in that direction.

TREVOR. Well, our present object is not so much the verbal modes in which 'twofold truth' is accustomed to find expression, as the phenomenon itself. I think we shall find on fair examination that the antinomy which takes so extreme a form as the deliberate combination in a single intellect of contrary truths is really traceable to causes lying

[1] Mark vii. 9.

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far down in the constitution of the human mind and its relation to nature and humanity. That at least is the moral of my paper on 'Twofold Truth,' which I will now proceed to read.

. . . . . .

Although thinkers in the present day are taught to regard their minds as the products of that omnipotent evolution that has educed the whole of natural phenomena, metaphysical as well as physical, from primæval chaos, there seems still left, perhaps as a 'survival,' an ineradicable instinct to assign it, so far back as we can trace it, an independence and autonomy of its own. Probably there never existed a race so rude as not to possess some power of discriminating between the subjective thought and objective being, between the 'ego' and the 'non-ego.' Thus in man's most rudimentary relation to the outer world there is postulated a dualism. No sooner does he begin to think than he recognizes himself as an entity disparate from and even partially opposed to the environment in which he lives. At first this perception of duality is not a strong feeling; but as man advances in civilization, as he becomes able to discriminate clearly his position with regard to nature and humanity, the feeling increases. He begins to find that just as he himself forms an infinitesimally small part of the universe, so his personal knowledge is utterly incommensurate with the sum-total of existence, which nevertheless it would fain fathom. Thence results a feeling of incongruity between man as the knower and the universe as the thing known, which reaches its extreme stage when the philosopher refuses to make himself and his limited experience the sole measure of existence. This is the stage really reached in the maxim of Protagoras, 'Man is the measure of all things,' for the import of that dictum was not that man should make his individual experience the law of the universe, but that we should recognize the personal limitation and relativity of all his knowledge. Here then the dualism becomes well marked. The thinker rightly regards himself and his knowledge as a small islet in the immeasurable ocean of the unknown. Moreover, this conviction of disparity tends to advance with the progress of knowledge. Every extension of the bounds of the universe, whether in space or time, enlarges the limits of human Nescience, and the philosopher is fain to confess, 'What I know is a small part of what might be known,' indeed the aggregate sum of actual human knowledge is an inappreciably small fraction of conceivable knowledge, to say nothing of omniscience. Perhaps he advances a step further

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and says, 'My infinitesimally small knowledge, nay, that which I share with all other human knowers, can form no just or adequate standard of universal knowledge. Truths that I regard as absolute may not really be so. Those certainties of which I cannot even conceive the non-existence or incertitude may be to others no certainties at all. In other worlds, perchance scattered through space, matter may exist without any law of gravity, and our vaunted principles of arithmetic and geometry may be so modified that 2 + 2 might possibly make five, and two straight lines might haply inclose a space.'

Here, then, we have in man's elementary position in nature, regarding him as a rational being, a clear *locus standi* for some such principle as twofold truth. Gradually man acquires the conviction that the known can never be an adequate measure of the unknown. Indeed the assertion of an inevitable antinomy between man and the universe is no more than the involuntary homage we are compelled to render to the infinite possibilities by which we are surrounded, and so far 'twofold truth' might conceivably claim to be the erection of an altar to the unknown god.

Nor is this relation of man to the unknown materially modified by the fact that he has no means of determining the degree or kind of antagonism that may exist between himself and the universe outside of his cognition. We have no difficulty in conceiving, indeed our usual mode of generalization tends in this direction, that all other thinking beings in the universe may be constituted as we ourselves are; nor is it hard to imagine that distant portions of the universe may be formed after that model and with those laws with which our terrestrial *habitat* has made us acquainted. For aught we know, the antinomy that justifies twofold truth may not exist, or it may exist only partially, not sufficiently to warrant a complete dichotomy of the human reason. Still this consideration only serves to remove the difficulty a stage further off. Truth, to be complete and infallible, must be demonstrably true for all space, all time, and all legitimate thinking. Once admit that this cannot be proved, once suggest if only as a possibility that the truth lying outside of our experience is not of the same kind as that within, that existence elsewhere may be governed by laws and conditions of which we know nothing, and immediately there is introduced a basis for double truth. Henceforth it is open to the Skeptic to deny the existence of truth as a demonstrable universality. Compelled to accept the doctrine of the relativity of human knowledge, he is cut off by his very acceptance from all connection with the absolute.

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2. But there is another dichotomy incidental to man as a thinking being. Sooner or later he begins to discern that his own knowledge—the result of personal research and experience—has only a partial affinity with the general sum of knowledge professedly possessed by his fellow-men. Perhaps also he is led to doubt whether the faculties and methods by which he acquires knowledge operates in his own case and in the case of others in a precisely similar manner. He conceives himself to know and is dimly cognizant of the methods whereby he has attained knowledge, but how far either the method or result is shared in all its entirety by his fellow-men he cannot know. No doubt the discrimination here mentioned is a product of some advance in metaphysical inquiry. Among uncultured races there is no aptitude for the individualism which it implies. But it is inevitable to all higher thought, and wherever it takes place the result is a differentiation of the individual from the sum of humanity outside him, which implies, or may be held to imply, twofold truth. All higher philosophy teaches the thinker to admit the essential individuality of his thought. It forces from him the admission: 'The truth I conceive myself to know may not be in its precise form, nature, quality, and quantity, the truth that other men call by the same word, or embody in similar definitions. The means and processes that have enabled me to acquire it may not operate in the same manner and degree in the case of others.' This inevitable isolation of every thinker and every thought-process therefore carries with it an admission of double-truth, if not as an actuality, yet at least as a probability of a very high degree; and Clough's aspiration for himself—

> 'O let me love my love unto myself alone,
> And know my knowledge to the world unknown.'[1]

—really expresses the destiny of every self-reliant and profound thinker. To him the outside world—man with his vaunted knowledge—is but the counterfeit presentment of an existence which he does not and cannot share, or at most the externality is like the images in Plato's cave simile, consisting of dim shadows of objects existing in an unknown elsewhere, and which he can never expect to apprehend as substantial here-present realities.

3. But besides these conditions of dualism inevitable to man as a reasoning and progressive being, there are in most conditions of social life certain limits and restrictions which tend to demarcate the individual thinker from the environment in which he dwells.

[1] *Poems*, p. 89.

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Even in rudimentary stages of civilization man comes into contact with a body more or less compact of traditions, usages, beliefs, and opinions of various kinds. Endowed with a reasoning power capable of apprehending and testing truth, he finds that together with his inborn capacity for employing it he has ample material ready prepared for such employment. Between the 'ego' and the social 'non-ego' there hence arises a divergency that may possibly attain the dimensions of twofold truth. Religious or other beliefs may, for example, be presented to the thinker as a body of infallible and divinely prescribed truth which he must accept without hesitation or criticism. Perhaps, notwithstanding all the divine and human sanctions attesting such traditional beliefs, his own reason freely applied is able to detect a weakness or incongruity in what he is asked to accept. This of itself suggests a dualism. The thinker in self-defence is compelled to assume a critical, if not negative, attitude to the general stock of beliefs which constitute his mental environment. I need hardly add that this is the starting point of all Skepticism, which begins if it does not end in antagonism and twofoldedness. No doubt the phenomenon here mentioned is common to all creeds resting on external and supernatural authority. So great is the native vigour, the spontaneity of the human reason, that a conflict with mere superimposed tenets and convictions may be regarded as a normal condition of its growth. Even in Greek philosophy, with all its speculative freedom, there are occasional signs of this dualism. Its mythological systems, its mysteries, philosophical schools, political parties, exercised a restraint greater or less upon its independent thought. The death of Sokrates is a salient and indisputable proof that Hellenic speculation was not absolutely free. Still it attained as great a degree of freedom as seems compatible with the ordinary prejudices and institutions of mankind. Its research extended itself into every department of human thought, and in each such direction it carried its maxim of theoretical liberty. Beyond Sokrates, Pyrrhôn, and Sextos, it was impossible to go. Freedom might be said to have transcended in those thinkers all reasonable limits, and to have attained a licence of self-contradiction which even became suicidal—so far as pure speculation with its intense vitality and endless capacity for transformations can be said to be capable of utter self-extinction. But in no creed has the dualism between its own authority and the mental freedom of its disciples assumed so vehement a form as in Christianity. This is to be accounted for not by anything in the teaching of its founder hostile to intellectual liberty, for it would be difficult to conceive

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any religion freer in its most authoritative prescriptions and involved tendencies than that of Christ. But it is due almost entirely to the form and nature of its ecclesiastical development. The very idea of Revelation—especially in the trenchant and exclusive form in which it was eventually asserted by the Church—postulated a condition of the recipient human reason which must sooner or later have entailed revolt. It was presented as the sole absolute authoritative and definitive enunciation of the Divine Will. It was expounded as leaving no room for hesitation or criticism: indeed the faintest attempts to reconcile its claims with Nature or Reason were reprobated as gross instances of impiety and ingratitude. Its dogmas were propounded not only as infallible truths, but as covering the whole area of knowledge and speculation permissible to humanity. No doubt this autocratic conception of the claims and powers of Revelation was a doctrine of somewhat slow growth. It cannot be said to be distinctly marked in the history of Christianity until after the Council of Nice. But even in the more moderate stages of its evolution prior to that event, the antagonism between Faith and Reason may be detected. A cursory glance at the steps by which the antinomy grew until it attained the dimensions of double-truth will not be an unfitting episode in our history of Free-thought.

The commencement of any great religious movement is so far like initiatory stages in the development of the human mind that there is no scope for dissidence or doubt. Whatever be the varied aspects under which it is presented to its adherents, they all have points of convergence and unity either in the creed or in the person of its founder. In the glow of religious enthusiasm, the passionate fervour of men animated by powerful feeling and united by common sympathies and opinions, there is little room for hesitation and criticism, still less for actual divergency. Different interests and standpoints coalesce for the time being like the interfusion of various chemical substances in a furnace; and it is only when this amalgamating point of temperature becomes lowered—when the first warm enthusiasm has subsided—when what was largely emotional manifests a tendency to become critical—that signs of disparity and segregation proclaim themselves.

We do not therefore find for some time after the birth and first propagation of Christianity any pronounced trace within the Church itself of a Skeptical dualism. No doubt there were conflicting standpoints to be reconciled. The position, *e.g.* of Christianity to Judaism was a question which might be deter-

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mined by the hypothesis of dual and antagonistic revelations. In some cases it is evident this result was actually proclaimed as a solution of the incompatibility. At the same time this difficulty was only local, the relation of one Palestinian religion or stage of religious thought to another. But a far profounder dichotomy was that disclosed when Christianity began to take deliberate cognizance of its position as regards Pagandom. This dualism, or at least this standpoint containing the elements of dualism, came to maturity in the school of Alexandria. Here we find Christianity in direct contact with Hellenic thought, no doubt of a somewhat debased character, but still possessing the attributes of intellectual freedom and genuine love of enlightenment that distinguished its earlier stages. Regarded from the standpoint of ecclesiasticism, the contact was strongly suggestive of antagonism. Broad thinkers like Clement and Origen were bound to take a liberal and comprehensive view of the mutual relation of Gentilism and Christianity, and actual dualism might accordingly be avoided by theories of prior revelations or the help of a mystical allegorism. But to fair and critical thinkers not largely endowed with imagination, the coequal veracity of Gentile thought and Christian revelation could only be reconciled by a dualism that accepted both without even trying to find a point of junction between them.

But the influence of Alexandrian Hellenism tended to create a permanent basis for 'Twofold Truth' in the Christian Church for another reason. Among all its legacies to after-ages Greek philosophy bequeathed none more important than its dialectical research, whether in the Skeptical form of the Dialogues of Plato or in the more positive one of the formal logic of Aristotle.

In the works of Porphyry and the other commentators on Aristotle lay the seed of that dialectic that was destined to bloom so many centuries afterwards in Scholasticism,[1] and that gave birth to more than one form of intellectual antagonism. Though patronized by some of the Fathers, and afterwards introduced into Christian schools, the study of dialectic was always regarded with a suspicious eye by the leading dogmatists of the Church. Irrespectively of its pagan origin and associations, its implicit tendencies in the direction of intellectual freedom and independence were too strongly marked to allow its favourable reception at the hands of a dominant sacerdotalism. Such men as Jerome were just as keen-sighted in foreseeing the havoc which mental science

[1] Comp. Prantl, *Geschichte der Logik*, vol. i. ch. xi.; Hauréau, *Hist. de la Phil. Scol.* vol. i. chap. ii.

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must cause to ecclesiastical dogmas as the Athenians were when in the interests of their mythological beliefs they opposed the logical exercitations of the Sophists and Sokrates.[1] It was a sufficing condemnation of dialectic that its principles and scope lay outside the domain of theology, and if the latter were held to be 'super logicam'—superior to logic—the inevitable result would be Twofold Truth.

Nor do the influences already mentioned exhaust the aspects of dualism presented to us in the early history of Christianity. The Gnostics, *e.g.* opposed their intuitional supernatural enlightenment (γνῶσις) to the teaching of the Church (πίστις), and the so-called half-Gnostics took in the issue the position of 'double truth.' Gnosticism with its many ramifications is indeed only one form out of many in which Oriental dualism is traceable in sects, existing either within or on the confines of the Church. A kind of Twofold Truth is also discernible in the rival authorities deferred to by Augustine and other Fathers, under the titles the Light of Nature and that of Grace. The predilection of the Bishop of Hippo for such dualisms both in philosophy and theology is a distinctly marked feature of his thought, which he did not throw off with his renunciation of Manichæanism. Similar affinities also distinguish a few of the Greek Fathers. Nor have we any reason to feel surprise at these occasional manifestations of antagonism among the ablest teachers of the Christian Church. The very progress of Ecclesiasticism in relation to human thought was surcharged with antinomical conditions. Thus, when the formation of the canon raised the text of Scripture into a final and authoritative standard of faith, the possibility of Twofold Truth was implicitly affirmed. In many cases the theory of an infallible book, claiming to be the sole word of God, had the effect of ruling profane literature out of court. This was indeed the ordinary result of that prepossession in the Latin Church. But there were instances of men adopting the conclusion of double-truth whenever the divergency between Scripture and Reason assumed an irreconcilable form. Another duality akin to this, but of somewhat later origin, was that of Scripture and Nature regarded as the twofold revelation of the Divine Mind. This also had its defenders among the more profound and farsighted theologians of the Church, *e.g.* Albert the Great. We shall have to discuss the most remarkable of them in point of development when we arrive at Raymund of Sabieude. It need scarcely be added that what holds good of Scripture, considered as a basis for dogma, holds

[1] See the collection of passages in Prantl, vol. ii. p. 6.

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good of every successive accretion to the systematic beliefs of the Church. They were so many objective poles of supposed truth placed in juxtaposition with the subjective pole of the human reason, sometimes even assuming a relation of repellency with it; and yet, like the opposition of positive and negative poles in an electric battery, not unfrequently generating light by their contact.

I do not, however, wish to insist too strongly on these elements of dichotomy in the gradual growth of ecclesiastical Christianity, preparatives though they were to the full avowal of Twofold Truth. We must bear in mind, as partly explaining the absence of vehement antagonism between Faith and Reason in the early history of the Church, that its dogmatic system was as yet in a vague and unformed condition, and did not at first present that harsh and repellent aspect to all alien modes of thought which it subsequently did. Besides which, it is true of intellectual as of every species of insurrection, that it implies a certain growth of self-assertion and reactionary power. The Reason must attain to a consciousness of its strength and of its claims before it can be expected to assert either the one or the other. During the ages usually styled dark, what with ecclesiastical oppression, the prevalence of ignorance and superstition, and the political disorganization that reigned throughout Europe, there was little chance for any open and pronounced dissidence from the dogmatic teaching of the Church. Scotus Erigena might claim to be the dividing point between the substantial unison of the past eight centuries of Church history and the distinct dissonance of Faith and Reason which began with Scholasticism. His avowal that true philosophy was really identical with religion may be taken as the final form of that truce between authoritative dogma and mental freedom that had so long existed before the breaking out of the formidable struggle between the belligerents which has continued to the present day.

Twofold Truth may be said to have come to maturity in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. By this time the human reason was beginning to recover from the repression to which it had been so long subjected by the Church. Stimulated by various quickening agencies, which we shall have to notice more fully when we discuss the Italian Renaissance, and of which I will only mention one in this place—the Arab philosophy—it acquired no small share of that independence and self-reliance that belong to it of right. One of the first objects which the awakened Reason had to consider was its relation to dogma regarded as definitive and infallible truth. As we have seen, the authority of the Church had long proscribed all kinds of inquiry, which tended in their

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methods to mental freedom and in their results to conclusions outside her ordinary limits. All human knowledge was absorbed by Theology.[1] This 'mistress science' had, perhaps by way of evincing her superiority, devoured all the rest. When Christian philosophy, therefore, came into being with the advent of Scholasticism, it was at first only regarded as a novel mode of theological inquiry.[2] The truths so long maintained by the Church and set forth in her creeds were merely reiterated and confirmed by the special faculty of the Reason. The goal was the same; it was only the starting-points and directions that differed, and even these were to a great extent coincident. Reason was thus in the position of a minor state, having within it the elements of freedom and autonomy, but kept in subjection by a powerful and unscrupulous neighbour. Naturally, the first aim of philosophy, or its instrument the Reason, was to effect something like a new *modus vivendi* with its oppressor. There was no attempt as yet to proclaim the independence of philosophy. The 'handmaid of theology' was still compelled to keep to her subordinate place, however much she might endeavour to enlarge its duties or widen her own experience. Like the squire of a knight of chivalry, it was enough that she should be allowed to fight the battles of theology, to wield her self-forged weapons in her defence. For the moment Theology failed to perceive that the skill and prowess philosophy was thus able to attain might hereafter be applied to her own purposes, to secure, *e.g.* her own independence and the undisturbed exercise of her autocratic functions. Happily for human progress, this was precisely what took place. Reason, growing in strength and resolution as well as in the power of handling her native weapons, was not averse to employing both it and them in struggles outside the limits of theological dogma. This employment was justified in the eyes of the greatest mediæval thinkers by the inherently different methods which pertained to reason and faith. One was the region of belief and feeling, the other that of intellection and conviction. Gradually this original disparity took a more definite and pronounced form. Different

[1] Among the propositions condemned by Stephen, Bishop of Paris, in 1276, occur the two following:

Cap. xi. 4. 'Item quod nihil plus scitur, propter scire Theologiam.'

Cap. xi. 6. 'Item quod lex Christiana impedit addiscere.'

It would be exceedingly difficult to disprove the truth contained in these opinions of the advanced thinkers of Paris in the thirteenth century. Comp. *Max. Bib. Vet. Pat.* vol. xxv. p. 335.

[2] Comp. Baur, *Dogmengeschichte*, ii. p. 208; and Haurëau, *Hist. de la Phil. Scol.* vol. i. p. 30.

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methods might justifiably lay claim to diverse and even opposite results. If Faith ended in religious dogma, why might not Reason find her own outcome in philosophical convictions? In this case Reason might fairly assert within her province her own rightful autonomy, and proclaim her independence of the supremacy of Faith. Nor would it be necessary to go beyond this. Reason, both from fear and policy, had no desire to injure or supplant Faith. She did not even pretend to be the equal of Faith in every respect. All she pleaded for was a recognition of independence, deliverance from the heavy fetters and manacles that had so long bound her; freedom to pursue her own methods and avouch her conclusions without the perpetual supervision and the arrogant dictation of her acknowledged superior. At this precise stage Twofold Truth made its appearance. Reason and Faith were declared to imply two different territories, ruled by different laws and actuated largely by rival interests. This position seems to have been taken nearly contemporaneously both in France and Italy, especially in the universities of Padua and Paris. In the year 1240, *e.g.* we have a condemnation by William, Bishop of Paris, of certain 'Detestable errors against the Catholic faith,'[1] among which we find the opinion that 'many truths are from eternity which are not God Himself,' against which the bishop affirms the counter-proposition, that 'only one truth is from eternity, which is God Himself, and that no truth exists from eternity which is not that truth.' But a more elaborate proof of the extent and ramifications of Twofold Truth in the University of Paris is supplied by the denunciation in 1276 by Stephen, Bishop of Paris, of certain errors attributed to the Averroists, and professed by certain members of the university.[2] Among these errors were certain assertions founded on the writings of the heathen which were held to be 'true in philosophy, but not according to the Catholic faith, as if,' adds the bishop, 'there were two antagonistic truths, and as if in opposition to the truth of Holy Scripture there could be truth in the writings of these accursed Gentiles, of whom it is written: "I will destroy the

[1] *Maxima Bibliotheca Vet. Patr.* vol. xxv. p. 329; D'Argentré, *Coll. Jud.* vol. i. p. 158. Compare on Mediæval Double-Truth, Dr. M. Maywald's interesting monograph *Die Lehre von der Zweifachen Wahrheit.*

[2] Few documents on the Free-thought of the Middle Ages are more interesting than this. The inculpated articles number over 200. They may be found in *Max. Bib. Vet. Patr.* vol. xxv. pp. 330–35, and in D'Argentré, *Coll. Jud.* i. 177–84. But most of the articles bearing on Twofold Truth are collected in Maywald's monograph *Lehre von der Zweifachen Wahrheit*, pp. 9–11. Comp. also Crevier, *Hist. de l'Univ. &c.* vol. ii. pp. 76, 77.

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wisdom of the wise," &c.'—words which express clearly the general principle as well as the probable issue of double-truth. I will add a few more of these incriminated propositions, in order to show the method and real purport of this and similar conceptions in the thirteenth century. The bishop condemns the tenets—

'That the natural philosopher as such ought to deny the creation[1] of the world, because his opinion is based upon natural causes and reasons. The Christian, on the other hand, may deny the eternity of the world because his opinion is founded on supernatural causes.'

'That creation is impossible, although the contrary may be held as a matter of faith (*secundum fidem*).'

'That no question is reasonably disputable which a philosopher ought not to dispute and determine: because reasons are received from things. To philosophy, however, pertains the consideration of all things according to their various parts.'

'That the wise of the world are the only philosophers.'

'That there is no state more excellent than the cultivation of philosophy.'

'That a man should possess a certain conclusion, it is necessary that it should be based upon principles known independently (*per se*). It is an error when a general proposition is made as to one certitude of apprehension and another of adhesion.'

'That a future resurrection should not be believed nor granted by a philosopher because it is impossible to ascertain its truth by reason—an error, because even the philosopher ought to surrender his intellect as a captive to the obedience of the faith of Christ.'

'That the individual soul is unchangeable according to philosophy, but changeable according to faith.'

'That man should not be satisfied with authority if he can attain any other kind of certitude.'

It is clear that a scheme of thought of which such maxims reveal the general method and purport is one characterized by no ordinary freedom and audacity. The Reason that could have educed those conclusions and set them forward in a determined self-asserting manner was never, we might suppose, in great danger of being extinguished by the authoritative dogmas of Faith. We begin to perceive, too, what a powerful lever was afforded by the dualism of Faith and Reason for emancipating the human intellect from the thraldom of Ecclesiasticism; for, leaving out of consideration the legitimacy of the instrument, we cannot deny its unrivalled potency. Never was there a more conspicuous instance of the effectiveness of the 'Divide et impera' method. The dogmas of the Church, with

[1] *Novitas* as distinct from *æternitas*.

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their manifold accretions of ignorance and superstition, were found to have lost at least half of their authority and thereby half of the terrorism they had long exercised over humanity. We cannot, I think, feel surprised that the Church from her standpoint of exclusiveness and infallibility should have hurled her anathemas against the authors and propagators of these opinions. Keenness of insight far less prompt than that which has always characterized Romanism might have easily discerned the issue involved in Twofold Truth. It clearly undermined her own position as the divine and sole accredited source of all truth. The verities she chose to stamp with her own brand were to have no longer the exclusive monopoly hitherto assigned them. Philosophy as a rival trader and bidder for the patronage of humanity set up a store of her own, with her own special commodities, authenticated by her own mark, and trader-like did not scruple to boast the superiority of her goods in certain respects to those retailed by the Church. Whatever other effects might attend this rivalry, at least there was opposition—rudimentary free-trade in human dogmas and opinions. A new condition of human liberty was established, which if not destined to bear much fruit for the present was full of promise for the distant future. The Church could only fall back on her ancient claim of oneness and individuality. To her boasted unity of form she was astute enough to add the philosophic conception of the essential oneness of all truth, and laid claim to both alike. Truth was not biform as those dualists asserted—a kind of centaur, half divine, half human. On the contrary, truth was *ex vi termini*. whole, complete, and indiscerptible, fully embodied and revealed in her own doctrine, form, and polity. It was to no purpose that divines like Abelard and Aquinas, and philosophers like Giordano Bruno, pleaded for the separate existence of secular truth, and expatiated on the natural diversity in object and method between Religion and Philosophy. Both the reasoning and the conclusion were alike disclaimed. As the virtues of the heathen were to earlier ecclesiastics only 'splendid vices,' so the mediæval Church was eager to pronounce all truths not originated by herself, and which had never received her sanction, mere plausible forms of falsehood. Nor is this prejudice confined to any one part of the history of Romanism. Up to the present day she has reserved her most implacable hostility, her choicest vocabulary of vituperation, for the daring propounders of truth, of whatever kind, outside the limits of her own dogma.[1] What was true of philosophy in the

[1] For the more recent decrees and pronouncements of the Papacy on this point, comp. Cæsare Cantù: *Gli Eretici d'Italia*, vol. i. p. 197.

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time of the Schoolmen became true of astronomy in the time of Galileo, and of general physical science in all subsequent periods.

On the other hand, from the standpoint of intellectual progress Twofold Truth was not without its value. For whatever peril might attach to its extreme assertion, however much it might conflict with logical axioms and laws of thought, and however destructive it might seem to the oneness and solidarity of the individual consciousness, it was at least useful as a method of inquiry. The vindication of the rights of Reason which it implied was in point of fact a philosophical Protestantism. Outside the Church, philosophy had now erected a conventicle, just as Protestantism under Luther did two centuries subsequently. Room was thus afforded for conscientious dissidents, and a fatal blow was struck at the assumed unity and tyrannical aggrandizement of the Papacy. Nor was this all. The assertion of the coequal authority of the Reason with the Ecclesiasticism hitherto exclusively dominant had further implications. It imparted a breadth to intellectual research hitherto unknown to Christendom. The exclusiveness and dogmatism of the Church had necessarily curtailed the scope of human inquiry. When Theology claimed to be the only truth, and her methods the sole avenues to its possession, there could be no further question as to other verities or alien methods. The field of nature might be ever so great, its contents never so inviting, but of what avail was this in the face of a dogma that theoretically included nature and everything else in its conspectus of infallible certainty? Similarly the field of mind might invite investigation and be well calculated to repay it; but in its fullest sense this department of culture was equally prohibited, or, which came to the same thing, the cultivation was rendered nugatory by the all-inclusive claims of the Church. Twofold Truth was a natural protest against this condition of things. Declaring Reason to be autonomous, it demanded scope for its free exercise. Nor was the territory thus claimed a small one. With a true perception of the rights of Reason, it required a field for criticism and research in every direction. 'Philosophy,' said the maintainers of double-truth—perhaps in satirical imitation of the claims of theologians—'should be conversant with all things.' When we come to the Renaissance we shall find how much this encyclopædic view of knowledge governed human research. In this commencement of science the human mind, on account of its long starvation, claimed to be omnivorous. All knowledge, real and supposed, was devoured with a passionate craving which men nurtured on regular and plentiful diet fail to understand. This tendency to universality

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reacted on the great intellects of the Church itself, and the *Summists*, as the writers of *Summæ* were called, did what in them lay to make theology comprehend in its subdivisions and ramifications all knowledge, even when its component parts were largely self-contradictory. But it is evident that neither among early science-workers nor among Arab philosophers, nor yet among the doctors of the Church, could this broad idea of the functions and province of knowledge have arisen except the Reason had first been freed by some such process as Twofold Truth.

The importance of the theory at the time when it originated is fully attested by its immense popularity and rapid diffusion. Throughout the chief universities of France and Italy it became the authoritative *lex credendi* of professors and students, while it was by no means unknown to advanced thinkers in England [1] and Germany. Nor again was it a mere transient episode in the history of mediæval Free-thought, for there are manifold traces of its widespread influence during the thirteenth and two following centuries. Hence whatever might be the inherent difficulties of the doctrine, it was undoubtedly well adapted to subserve intellectual wants at a particular period. Popes and bishops might rail at it, might point out its incongruity both theologically and philosophically, might insist on the indissoluble oneness of truth, but the doctrine itself grew and prospered until it might be said to have become absorbed and intensified by the more unequivocal assertion of the rights of Reason involved in Protestantism and modern science.

An interesting illustration of the growth and importance of double-truth is found in the promptness with which it seized upon all similar antinomies already in existence, and the modified forms it assumed in consequence. The antagonism, *e.g.* between dialectic and theology as opposite methods of mental training each independent of the other [2]—the recognized disparity between Aristotle and general Christianity, or between the doctrines of Averroes and certain dogmas of the Church, are all merely forms of the larger dualism between Faith and Reason or Religion and Philosophy.

[1] See the list of errors condemned by Robert Kilwardby, Archbishop of Canterbury, A.D. 1276, D'Argentré, *Coll. Jud.* vol. i. 185. In this list the first in the division of errors in logic is the following distinct enunciation of Twofold Truth, 'Quod contraria possunt simul esse vera in aliquâ materiâ.'

[2] Comp. Hauréau, *Hist. de la Phil. Scol.* p. 31: 'Il n'y a pas un logicien du XIII^e^ siècle qui paraissant en chaire, ne commence par déclarer que, cette chaire n'étant pas celle de Théologie, il laissera les mystères, les sacraments en dehors de sa controverse, pour traiter seulement les questions dont l'autorité n'interdit pas l'examen.'

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The justification of this subsumption might be found in the fact that both Faith and Reason had their place in the œconomy of the human mind. For however much Ecclesiasticism might endeavour in its own selfish interests to obscure this truth and to pervert or render nugatory the functions of the Reason, it could not succeed in repressing it when once it had entered on a course of deliberate self-assertion. If only as a species of 'common sense'—a guidance in the secular concerns of life—the Church was compelled to allow some modicum of rationality as an attribute of humanity. Reason and Faith might be 'unequally yoked together,' a marriage, *e.g.* of angel and satyr, of the divine and human; still, that it was an actual marriage the Church—when challenged with the fact—durst not deny.

The *modus vivendi* of coequality, on which Reason insisted by the assertion of double-truth, came gradually to be allowed in terms, though in reality the recognition might be quite nullified by the exorbitant claims of Faith over Reason. Attempts were made to apportion quantitatively the respective amounts of Faith and Reason which could claim the sanction of the Church. These were founded on the theory that as representing different provinces and functions of the same human mind they were capable of being so blended in almost infinite variety. The theory was doubtless true, but it was capable of a different application than that which the Church thought fit to allow. For if the 'blend' in favour with ecclesiastics gave an immeasurable superiority to Faith, the combination most affected by philosophers gave a large precedence to Reason. Indeed, the Italian philosophers of the Renaissance seem to have given no small attention to ascertaining the minimum of faith which might be combined with a maximum of Reason so as to escape the imputation of confessed heresy. Not that their attempt was a whit more disingenuous than the conduct of theologians when they pretended a deference to the irresistible claims of philosophy far in excess of their real sentiments.

Further modifications of double-truth meet us in the writings of the Schoolmen. Thus in the different standpoints adopted by Anselm and Abelard, the former of whom asserted the relation of Faith to Reason in the formula 'Credo ut intelligam,' and the latter in the counter-proposition 'Intelligo ut credam,' the opposite poles of the dualism assumed a rivalry of priority rather than of downright antagonism. One was affirmed as the propædeutic of the other. The dualistic distinction of natural and revealed religion obscurely set forth by some of the earlier Fathers of the Church received a new impetus from the mediæval conflict of Faith and Reason, while a more pro-

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found and altogether praiseworthy dichotomy was that avowed by Duns Scotus, who made Christianity consist entirely in ethical science and moral practice, and thus left the whole range of speculation absolutely free. Other varieties of 'double-truth' will again meet us when we glance at the Free-thought of Abelard and Aquinas.

There can be little doubt that 'Twofold Truth,' regarded as the deliberate utterance of propositions, or the simultaneous cultivation of mental functions more or less antagonistic, would never have had the effect we know it to have had were it not justified by certain dualistic phenomena manifest in the human consciousness. Indeed, the diverse provinces of Reason and Faith might with a little manipulation be made conterminous with the different ranges of intellection and emotion, or of experience and imagination. Let us glance for a moment at some of these dualisms, bearing in mind, however, that we are now entering upon 'double-truth' in its subjective aspects as implied in the psychological formation of the human intellect.

Regarded merely as mental states, there is an enormous difference in the attitude of a man who is engaged in demonstrating a problem of Euclid, and of the same man offering up prayer for the life of a beloved child. The contrast is not merely between the intellectual object gained and the emotional object sought for, but extends itself more particularly to the subjective mood involved in either case. On the one hand there is a consciousness of certitude, on the other hand a painful feeling of incertitude. Nor is this difference between intellection and emotion greatly modified even when both become equal states of certitude. The conviction, *e.g.* of a geometrical truth, is of a totally different kind from the emotional assurance which the father feels when he knows that the fever crisis is past, and that in all human probability his child will be spared to him. Now it is the characteristic of most religious beliefs that they professedly belong to the regions both of feeling and intellectual conviction. First imparted by authority parental or otherwise, they are confirmed by long association, and are protected and enhanced by the various sacred and subtle influences that invest all religious beliefs. With this peculiar prestige they take their places among the numberless unanalyzed concepts and opinions that form the general stock of human convictions. Ordinarily they never advance beyond this elementary stage, at least in reality, though in many cases the emotional basis of religious beliefs may be supplemented by a superficial intellection which is hardly more than a predetermination to support foregone conclusions. But in all cases

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of genuine mental growth there is a progress from the stage of unverified emotion to that of critical ratiocination. Religious beliefs, in common with other contents of the mind, are subjected to a rigid scrutiny. The thinker feels compelled as a matter of intellectual honesty to give a reason for the hope that is in him. If tenets so treated are capable of sustaining the criticism directed to them, they reach their culminating stage of conviction. Frequently, however, the contrary takes place—beliefs received into the mind recklessly or on insufficient authority are found on investigation to be unworthy of that position; but nevertheless, possessing from long association a strong hold on the affections, they continue to maintain their place as tenets or persuasions of the emotions. We must not, however, suppose that such a transfer is made readily or easily. Every noteworthy record of mental progress proves how difficult it is to undermine, not to say eliminate, beliefs once fully accepted by the feelings. Probably no English writer has discussed with more subtlety or greater introspective penetration the various kinds and degrees of theological assent than Dr. Newman. His work on the subject, whatever might be thought of its conclusions, throws incidentally no small light on the complex nature of human beliefs from the point of view of their recipients. He often has occasion to dwell on the phenomenon we are now considering, and of which his own mental evolution supplied him with striking instances, of beliefs remaining in the feelings long after they have been discarded from the intellect.[1] Every such case must needs present an aspect of dual truth, though the extent of the dichotomy will depend on the amount of discordance actually existing between the older beliefs that retain their place in the emotions and the newer tenets that have supplanted them in the intellect. In any case the affirmation of one province of the mind is met by a denial of another. That such an incongruity might exist without assuming a forcible or definite form I am quite willing to admit; indeed, I am inclined to think that a large proportion of the religious convictions of even the thoughtful portion of mankind are precisely of this mixed kind. Especially is this the case during periods of intense mental activity and consequent transition, when older beliefs continue to linger in the affections and memory long after their former position in the intellect has been occupied by new and divergent convictions.[2] The Reformation, *e.g.* supplies us with numberless illustrations of this truth. The belief and usages of Romanism maintained their hold

[1] Comp. his *Apologia pro Vita Sua* and his *Grammar of Assent, passim.*

[2] See some interesting observations on the Decay of Dogmas in Theodore Jouffroy's *Mélanges philosophiques—Comment les Dogmes finissent.*

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on the popular mind for some time after they were ejected as national creeds from the Protestant countries of Europe. So that double-truth as an antagonism of reason and sentiment holds good of societies as well as of individuals. In short, we may take it as a general rule that whenever old convictions are superseded by new, there will always be intervening standpoints, from whence both may seem to be equally true.

Nor is it only the religionist who is thus susceptible of a revulsion of opinion that may engender a species of double-truth. Recent English philosophy has supplied us with the instance of a Skeptical thinker who, having long held that all the reasons of the case militated against the doctrine of immortality, finally became persuaded of its probability by the loss of a beloved wife. Here we have the case of a doctrine deemed untrue by the intellect, yet held to be at least partially true by the feelings. We cannot suppose in this case that the intellectual reasons formerly held valid against the belief were of themselves really lessened by the event that suggested its acceptance. The death of the philosopher's wife could have contained nothing as bearing on the truth of immortality that might not have been found in numberless similar events. But the deep sentiment evoked by his personal loss sufficed to oppose an affirmative to the negative of his reason. As a philosophic thinker he disbelieved, as a bereaved husband he believed. We may in passing observe that this dualism of reason and sentiment is of a more moderate character than the twofold truth of Pomponazzi, who affirmed immortality as a Christian but denied it as a philosopher, for in that case both the conviction and non-conviction were equally based on grounds of intellection. The antagonism was made between the affirmative of a revelation, which to a thinker must be established on rational grounds, and the negative of a philosophy, which must be based to a great extent on the same grounds. Here therefore the dichotomy is extreme and suicidal. It introduces disparity into the selfsame functions and processes of the intellect, and for that reason must be held to be incompatible with truth.

The distinction now under consideration between intellect and feeling has been often pursued to an extent which I think exaggerated. In Schleiermacher's well-known scheme of theology, for instance, the emotions are made the sole province of religion, to the utter exclusion of the Reason. Such a theory, even granting its utility under certain contingencies for reasoning beings, seems to me mistaken. I am unable to conceive full assent without some proportion of rational demonstration. But though

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this is my own conviction, I am quite aware of the incalculable power of emotion as the basis of a religious creed, and this not only when it is allied with intellection as supplementing its deficiencies, or changing the venue of its ratiocination, but even when it forms the whole and sole ground of its reception. For it is noteworthy that emotional beliefs, even when they are really only the ghosts of former tenets—when criticism and verification have evacuated them of all solid content—not only contrive to exist, but even to assert their right to a place among the substantiated convictions of the mind. Though they are only disembodied spirits, they continue to fill a place on the stage of a religious mind with as great an appearance of reality as if they were living bodies. I have known instances in which a whole regiment of convictions, discarded from the intellect, and their places occupied by reasoned tenets of an opposite kind, have still continued to exist in the feelings, and to be even regarded with something of the affection they possessed when they were based on supposed intellectual grounds. In other cases, in which Reason preponderates over feeling, they are no doubt recognised as the ghosts of defunct bodies, and their inauspicious presence is resented; but even this does not prevent an occasional intrusion on their own part, or do away with the feeling of being haunted on the part of their former possessors.

Somewhat akin to this dualism is another requiring notice as a possible foundation for double-truth. It may be described as the subjective form of the antinomy between the known and the unknown in the universe—I mean that which may occur between experience and imagination. To minds of a strongly idealizing character the least part of their general stock of convictions is that which is given in actual experience. Perpetually projecting themselves beyond the limits of the seen and felt, they live in a world of shadows and phantasies of their own creation. So much is this the case that their real environment seems quite to disappear, and an antinomy of more or less severity is created between their actual and imagined states.[1] The truth of the one becomes the falsehood of the other, or *vice versâ*. The history of idealism swarms with instances in which this dichotomy finds expression, but I need not waste our time in their enumeration. Examples will readily occur to us of the existence of in-

[1] Comp. on this point the words of J. H. Newman: 'We may speak of assent in our Lord's Divinity as strong or feeble according as it is given to the *reality as impressed upon the imagination* or to the *notion* of it as entertained by the intellect.' (*Grammar of Assent*, p. 178.)

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fluential and widespread schemes of philosophy which are pervaded by a persistent contradiction to human experience and history, in which actuality is engaged in an internecine war with ideality.

But in double-truth as in most other forms of mental eccentricity we must take some notice of 'the personal equation,' by which I mean the special differences and idiosyncrasies that exist between one man and another in respect of intellectual conformation. There are intellects, *e.g.* so intensely, I might say morbidly, synthetic, that they insist on acquiring demonstrated certitude at whatever cost. This type of mind must needs set itself to evolve unity from multiplicity, harmony from dissonance, light from a juxtaposition of shadows, without considering how far its self-imposed task is feasible or how far it is in agreement with the constitution of the universe. In the determination to acquire undoubted conviction, no labour is spared and no expense regarded. Subordinate convictions are ruthlessly thrust aside, objections are ignored, disingenuous methods resorted to, in order to obtain and definitively pronounce on certitude. Pascal is a striking example of this tendency.[1] When we come to discuss him we shall find what great paradoxes and unharmonized contradictions he waded through to attain what seemed to him infallible certainty. Dr. Newman's mental development is another illustration of the same truth.[2] His processes are irregular, inconsistent, self-contradictory, of impossible application to any other subject than that of mystical dogmatism. His conclusions, on the other hand, are brilliantly clear, vivid, unmistakable. His mental evolution stands forth like a mountain whose summit is lit up by a warm glow of sunshine, while the sides and base are enshrouded in darkness. Minds of this class appear to me dominated by a sort of religious or spiritual ambition which is just as selfish, audacious, unscrupulous, and unpitying as any other kind of ambition. A man who overturns all reasoning processes, who makes a chaos of human methods, who stultifies the lessons of history for the purpose of boasting a light which to his neighbours is only a deceptive *ignis fatuus*, is not unlike Napoleon, who forced his way through cruelty and bloodshed to attain a crown. Such men forget that the infallibility, the unity, and harmony they have achieved so recklessly suggest to the more cautious spectator division and dissonance. They forget that their

[1] Comp. *Essay on Pascal*, in the latter portion of this work.

[2] 'From the age of fifteen dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion; I know no other religion; I cannot enter into the idea of any other sort of religion. Religion as a mere sentiment is to me a dream and a mockery.'—*Apologia pro Vita Sua*, p. 120.

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shield has two sides, and if certainty is emblazoned on one, doubt is conspicuously legible on the other, and that the real Skepticism of their methods, the profound distrust of human reason which marks them, is only dimly veiled by the vaunted infallibility of their conclusions.

On the other hand, it must be granted that the 'double-truth' which manifests itself by a disparity of method and conviction belongs essentially to intellectual growth. Different stages of mental development will sometimes present themselves as Twofold Truth, though the effect of this duality is necessarily neutralized for its possessors by the continuity of their consciousness. In all such cases we must distinguish between those in which the progress is normal, gradual, and natural, and those in which it is reckless, violent, and unnatural; between the spurious instances in which the chief impelling agency is a predetermined volition, and when it is the Reason acting freely and spontaneously—moving onwards of its own sweet will.

But leaving those cases in which double-truth has been pressed into the service of dogma, there is another class of mind which manifests a similar duplicity in the service of unavowed uncertainty. I allude to those vacillating intellects of which we have numberless examples in political science, and of which in theology Justus Lipsius presents us with a striking instance. Here different convictions, notwithstanding their mutual hostility, are, from intellectual feebleness, alternating and recurrent. There is almost a perpetual oscillation between opposite poles of conviction. Such instances always remind me of the well-known chorus in 'Samson,' in which there is a remarkable antiphony of contradictions, 'Jehovah' and 'Great Dagon' being pronounced to 'reign' in regular and measured alternation. It is no unfair presumption in every such case that Skepticism is an operative agency in the mental changes. The contemporaries of Lipsius, for instance, were convinced of his Skepticism in spite of his protestations of final adhesion to Romanism, and even his friends the Jesuits showed by their continual distrust that they were inclined to share that opinion.

I come lastly to a third type of intellect, in which Twofold Truth presents itself in a moderate and altogether commendable shape; in which the disparity is not so much antagonistic as complementary, and the result of its functions is not disunion and hostility so much as a broad comprehensive solidarity. For our purpose we may call intellects of this class 'dual-sighted' or 'two-eyed.' You will perhaps remember the Greek term denoting the same quality which Timon applied to the Eleatic Zenon. This

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'double-sighted man' is by no means the synonym of the nickname common in Puritan history, 'Mr. Facing-both-ways.' It rather implies the possession of faculties which enable the observer to see every object in the solid, substantial manner, in the full relief, and with the true perspective that pertain essentially to all double vision. It is the instinctive power and tendency to discern a specific object or a given truth not merely as it is in itself or in one of its *primâ facie* aspects, but in its completeness as a whole and relatively to all its surroundings. We see this quality in the artist who simultaneously with the perception of an object also sees all its different phases as well as its relations to surrounding objects; or again in the general who apprehends by a single glance of his mental vision all the characteristics, bad as well as good, of a given position or military movement. So the philosophers I speak of catch every truth or doctrine, not in its simple and uniform, but in its complex biform or multiform aspect. They are men to whom every affirmation suggests, if only as a possibility, a negative; who intuitively meet every dogmatic pronouncement with an objection, just as a painter infers shadow from light. These are the men who in my judgment have rendered the best service to the progress of knowledge by their comprehensive vision, their cautious Skeptical attitude, their fearless criticism. Examples of these two-eyed thinkers we have already met in the course of our investigation, and we shall continue to meet with similar cases as we proceed, for twofold vision is a frequent if not inseparable concomitant of Skepticism. Nor can we say that this combination of thorough search with caution is needless in the domain of religious speculation. We must remember that there are questions so closely allied with man's highest interests that for that reason alone no assertion respecting them, no matter what its nature, is likely to be accepted as final by a thoughtful mind. The questions, *e.g.* of man's origin and destiny, the origin of the universe, &c. are continually recurring problems which like uneasy ghosts refuse to be laid. In such cases of inherent difficulty the assertion of a dogmatic judgment by means of a creed imparts but little definitive assurance. The assertion may be provisional and imperfect—possibly the outcome of an inferior state of knowledge—but the problems themselves are eternal. Assent may be yielded as a matter of faith, but the question as an object of demonstration may not be a whit nearer solution. No sooner are the words spoken, the dogma avouched, than the after-process of reflection sets in. Thinkers of this kind treat their creeds like a ruminating animal treats its food. It is again masticated and once more swallowed, perhaps both processes being

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more than once repeated, before final deglutition and assimilation take place, if indeed they ever do. So on the heels of creeds and dogmas pronouncing authoritatively on all the great matters of human concernment, treads, if not doubt, yet inquisitiveness and curiosity, an eagerness to scan what is beyond human vision.

Nor again does this Skeptical retrospection necessarily imply a disbelief of the dogmas to which it is directed; it may even coexist with an undoubting conviction of their truth. Just as we find men who evince the utmost resolution in all the practical matters of life, but whose determinations are followed by misgiving and a kind of theoretical uncertainty, so in speculation the assertion of an undoubted deliberately formed opinion may be accompanied or followed by after-criticism, which is no more than the spontaneous discharge of intellectual energy. Guicciardini, *e.g.* an essentially 'double-sighted' man, tells us that all his most important actions, even when performed with the utmost deliberation, were invariably followed by a sort of repentance and retrospective criticism.[1] The attitude of such men to asserted truth seems to be of this kind. Knowing by experience the infinite possibilities that beset all declared truth, they are apt to say of certain convictions, 'I believe this and will continue to believe it,' and yet *suppose* the other should be the truth. The reason is that in all subjects in which *pros* and *cons* are nearly balanced the deliberate adoption of one alternative does not annihilate the grounds of the other. The uncertainty banished from the subject still continues to exist in the object. Perhaps the discarded alternative will present itself to the consciousness in a more winning guise than before. It may appeal *ad misericordiam*, as a rejected conclusion when the grounds of such rejection were admittedly not overpowering. Thus the native hue of conviction as well as 'resolution' may be 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,' and, if I may be allowed a further paraphrase, it may happen that

> Determinations of great pith and moment,
> With this regard their currents turn awry,
> And lose the outward semblance of belief.

A singular feature in some minds of this class is that their doubt

[1] 'Io sono stato di natura molto resoluto e fermo nelle azioni mie; e nondimeno come ho fatto una resoluzione importante, mi accade spesso una certa quasi penitenza del partito che ho preso; il che procede non perchè io creda che se io avessi di nuovo a deliberare, io deliberassi altrimenti, ma perchè innanzi alla deliberazione avevo più presente agli occhi le difficultà dell' una a l'altra parte,' &c.—*Opere Inedite*, i. 141; *Ricordi*, clvi. Comp. Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, pp. 210, 211.

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is frequently caused not by a defect but by an excess of demonstration. They are repelled by what seems to them an abnormal and unnatural amount of proof. They are dazed and half blinded by the glare of sunshine. Men of this type are met in every department of thought where elaborate ratiocination and recondite speculation are as a rule necessary precursors to the formation of conviction. I have known, *e.g.* men in my own profession who invariably regard with suspicion a diagnosis in which all the conditions are unmistakably plain and obvious. They instinctively ask, May there not be some hidden cause, some obscure but most important symptom, that I have overlooked? The problem seems too easy, the conclusion too glaringly obvious, to be acceptable. We observe the same characteristic in lawyers, detectives, and others conversant with criminal procedure, and accustomed to disentangle long and intricate chains of evidence. Present to a man of this character a case of extreme simplicity, in which every part of the evidence is marked by undeniable cogency, and he is immediately offended. It is too clear and unmistakable to be natural. He does not perceive the obscure intimations, the indirect hints, on the elucidation of which he especially prides himself. With the cessation of perplexity ceases also his personal interest. Such men seem to value truth not by its plainness but by its obscurity, just as hieroglyphic and similar inscriptions are estimated by the difficulty of their decipherment.

The dramatic illustration of this type of character in the practical concerns of life, is, I need not say, Hamlet, who is frightened from the discharge of an acknowledged duty by the embarrassing excess of its obviousness. His feeling is well described in his admission—

> Now, whether it be
> Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
> Of thinking too precisely on the event,
> A thought which quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom
> And ever three parts coward, I do not know
> Why yet I live to say, 'This thing's to do;'
> Still I have cause and will and strength and means
> To do 't. Examples gross as earth exhort me.

He might have added, had he been more conscious of the source of the infirmity he deplored, that it was precisely the 'grossness' of the 'examples' that deterred him. The energizing principle in such characters is in the inverse ratio of their reflective power. Profound meditation on what is simple, obvious, and direct has an obscuring and distrustful effect. No doubt the tendency is much more common in speculation than in action. The directness of a belief

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or conviction, while it equally deters him who thinks 'too precisely on the event,' has not that imperative, urgent character that an obvious duty presents. There is more scope for delay and reiterated consideration; in other words, for the indulgence of the thinker's favourite passion. For this reason the Skeptic in action such as Hamlet will always be a rare type of the genus to which he belongs.

The ludicrous excess to which this contempt for positive proof on account of its superabundant positiveness might conceivably be liable, is well illustrated in the story recorded by Plutarch and quoted with much relish by Montaigne. Demokritos eating figs found them taste of honey. He immediately began to speculate as to how the flavour was acquired, when his recondite investigation was peremptorily cut short by his servant, who admitted that she had placed them in a jar that had once contained honey. He indignantly rejected her too natural explanation, and avowed his intention of searching for the cause of the phenomenon as if it were quite independent of that which she had alleged. But the temper of mind of which this is an extravagant and probably imaginary illustration is capable of being defended by plausible reasons. 1. The general conditions of the problems of nature and humanity are as a rule complex and involved. Even existence itself to a reflective mind is a source of infinite puzzlement and speculation. Hence a problem of which the conditions are clear, simple and obvious seems on the face of it unnatural. 2. Intellects of the type now under consideration delight in the investigation of hidden and obscure causes for its own sake. Shunning the highways of truth and knowledge exploration, they prefer the byways, the unexplored tracks, and unknown short cuts to their possible goal. Difficulty and perplexity have inexpressible charms for them; and if these do not already exist in the task they undertake, they instinctively put forth their best efforts to create them.

I do not contend that every example of this intellectual perversity is also an instance of double-truth. But it is so whenever the doubt cast by the excess of demonstration—the depth of shadow being in direct ratio to the vividness of the light that creates it—is so far equal to its cause as to produce a persistent indecision, whether in belief or in action.

Such seem to me to be the chief types, causes, and varieties of double-truth. A more extended survey of the provinces of the human intellect would serve to show that I have by no means exhausted the catalogue of dualisms to which it is liable. I have confined myself mainly to those we find in religious thought. But even with that limitation we have seen that Twofold Truth signifies

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much more than the customary antithesis of Faith and Reason—the imperative of Revelation opposed to that of intellectual coercion. The dichotomy which it asserts pertains to reasoning beings by virtue of their faculties and their place in the universe. Had no religion ever asserted on grounds of supernatural authority, power over humanity, there would still have been occasions of division and antagonism, still room for various forms and degrees of double-truth. Faith as 'the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,' would still have conflicted with Reason. The unknown would still have been *ex vi termini* divergent from the known. The antinomies of dual thinkers, from the Greek Skeptics to Kant, would in short have emerged in philosophy, if the Christian Revelation had never been heard of. No doubt the development of ecclesiastical Christianity, with its dogmatic extravagance and arbitrary temper, imparted an acerbity into the relations of faith and reason which they need not otherwise have had. Jealously excluding, ruthlessly condemning, even the most elementary exercise of reason as an autocratic faculty, the Church is mainly responsible for the implacable hostility that has on the whole marked her intercourse with human knowledge and progress. Had it not been for this there would have been no necessity for mediæval thinkers to demarcate so rigidly between Reason and Faith, to divide their allegiance between religion and philosophy, to offer alternate worship first to one, then to the other. In its extreme form of irreconcilable antagonism, Twofold Truth is therefore a sacrifice at the shrine of excessive dogma.

We are now, I think, in a position to approach our main question—how far Twofold Truth in any of its forms is clearly Skeptical. That the general tendency of Twofold Truth is in the direction of suspense or intellectual hesitancy it would be impossible to deny. That it may be so manipulated and applied as to sanction insincere assent to unpalatable doctrines is equally true; but that it is in all its stages incompatible with a definite persuasion of truth is by no means so certain. Most of the dualisms we have considered are reconcilable with an ultimate conviction of truth. The human mind, even when most inclined to twofoldedness, yet acts like a pair of scales—no adjustment of rival balances can be established so accurately that one will not preponderate over the other. The chief question for our decision seems, therefore, to be this—we must determine that precise point where the dichotomy becomes irreconcilable, where Faith and Reason, the Known and the Unknown—individual man and collective humanity—Intellect and Emotion, are so placed in diametrical opposition that the antagonism

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is permanent and indestructible. No doubt it will be alleged that truth under all aspects must be one and indivisible. I grant it must be so theoretically; it would not otherwise harmonize with the conceptions we seem compelled to form concerning it. There are certain truths physical and ethical which we seem obliged to regard as absolute and unconditional. But this obligation is individual and subjective. It must agree with and be limited by the great fact of the relativity of all knowledge. Hence the form of double-truth which I should alone pronounce to be distinctly Skeptical is *that which destroys the unity of the individual consciousness.* Regarding consciousness as in ultimate scrutiny the abode of truth, and its processes as the ordinary methods of truth, it is clear that discrepancies in truth must be finally determined as to their nature and extent by their presentation in consciousness. It would be absurd to suppose that two contradictory deliverances of consciousness, both being recognised as equally true, could coexist in a sane and healthy mind at the same time. Twofold Truth is therefore not so destructive to objective truth *per se* as to the subjective consciousness of knowledge. It creates division and contrariety in the indissoluble oneness of the human mind. Objectively and apart from our cognition, aspects of truth may, for aught we know, be diverse and multiform; in the infinity of space and time we have no adequate reason for affirming that they are not; but we cannot without the most gratuitous mental suicide allow the subjective co-existence of antagonistic convictions both claiming to be true at the same time. We must maintain, I think, the indivisibility of consciousness not only as an ultimate postulate of truth, but as a *sine quâ non* of all affirmation and ratiocination of whatever kind. I am aware that this position—the ultimate veracity of consciousness, has been questioned; indeed, in a dialectical mood I have frequently questioned it myself, and in my own opinion not unsuccessfully so far as formal ratiocination is concerned. For that matter, I have had too long an experience of the subtleties and multiform aspects of logic not to know that there is no principle which can be formulated as an axiom of truth which unscrupulous dialectic cannot undermine. Even the '*Cogito, ergo sum,*' of Descartes may be shown to be open to innumerable objections both as to form and substance. But while I think those extreme exercitations not only harmless in themselves but useful as intellectual gymnastics—just as the paradoxes of the higher mathematics may be useful—I nevertheless regard them as mere *brutem fulmen* when employed seriously to destroy consciousness: at most they can only result in setting reason to destroy reason—a mere self-stultifying and utterly ineffective operation.

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Reason and the direct deliverances of consciousness have a vitality much too inherent to succumb to attacks of formal logic, no matter how adroitly planned or how skilfully conducted. The dialectician who in earnest undertakes such a task is engaged in an enterprise much more fruitless than the ancient battle with the Hydra: the heads he amputates replace themselves with greater facility—the life he supposes himself to take is but the precursor of renewed vitality. From this standpoint of reason and consciousness we must, then, pronounce against all extreme forms of double-truth.

As an additional plea for this vindication of consciousness we may remember that its veracity has never been impugned even by extreme Skeptics. All attempts made in that direction, whether by ancient or modern thinkers, resolve themselves into the free spontaneous exercise on the part of the Reason of her own exuberant vitality and her superabundant energies. They no more impair or render questionable her ultimate self-assurance than the playful gambols of a young animal result in doing itself mischief. The most advanced of Greek Skeptics were always ready when challenged to defer to consciousness, notwithstanding their repeated attempts to dethrone her from her place and power considered as a source or attestation of Dogma or Universal Truth.

But though in principle we feel bound to maintain the oneness and veracity of consciousness, the application of that test to any given case of double-truth is attended with difficulty. We cannot too persistently remember that divergent beliefs assume a different form and operate in a different manner according to the intellectual conformations of their recipients. For my own part, and regarding the matter from my personal standpoint, I should be inclined to pronounce Pomponazzi's assent to the doctrine of immortality imperfect; but it is evident that it did not appear so to him. Similarly, I should prefer the identity which Erigena tried to establish between religion and philosophy to the extreme disparity between the two which the Paduan and Parisian professors in the fourteenth century were wont to assert; but I have no difficulty in believing that the conviction of the latter was just as serious and marked by *bona fides* as that of the former. So I should not myself regard assent to a given dogma on purely emotional grounds as altogether satisfactory; but I have no reason to doubt that doctrines thus based are fully credited by numbers of religious thinkers. Indeed, I think there is an increasing tendency in the religious world to make this the only foundation of all the more difficult dogmas of Christianity, those *credenda* which Boileau describes:

De la Foi des Chrétiens les mystères terribles.

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I do not know that I need add anything as to the present aspect of double-truth—I mean the antagonism existing between Christianity and modern science. There are undoubtedly men in the scientific world—of whom Faraday was an illustration—who combine advanced opinions on science with retrograde and superstitious ideas of Christianity. Probably they are more in number than is generally thought, for on the subject of such a dichotomy, though they feel no repugnance to it, men are apt to be reticent. On the other hand, there are religious men imbued with a full belief in Christianity and yet prepared to embrace all well-attested discoveries in science, possibly being even unconscious of any insuperable antagonism between their dual standpoints. These relations may exist in modes infinitely varied both in kind and in degree. But the general subject is so intimately allied with Freethought that we shall have many future opportunities of discussing it. At present I will only avow my own persuasion that this latest form of the antinomy between Faith and Reason exists, not between the religion of Christ and genuine, *i.e.* modest and cautious, science; but between the ecclesiastical development of the former and the excessive dogmatism of the latter.

. . . . . .

ARUNDEL. Although your admission that consciousness must not be sundered may be considered as something saved from the omnivorous maw of Skepticism, it nevertheless seems to me that your restricting this solidarity and sense of veracity to the individual consciousness really does away with objective truth almost as much as if you had allowed the consciousness to be broken up into discordant sections. For if truth exists for me only in my individual consciousness—if I cannot regard it in any sense as the common property of all beings similarly organized and instructed—it is really equivalent to saying there can be no truth at all. As to making such a position a protection against 'double-truth,' it is only by proving it to be multiple, in accordance with the maxim, '*Quot homines, tot sententiæ*,' or '*veritates*.'

HARRINGTON. Your argument, Arundel, strikes at the root of every system of idealism, and urges a point which has again and again been discussed in philosophy. In maintaining that the consciousness cannot be dualized, Dr. Trevor has

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conceded all that an idealist could fairly claim. Grant that there can be no disruption of the thinking subject, at least normally and properly, and the undividedness of the object thought is, *ipso facto*, admitted. The indivisibility of all external truth to you is involved in your subjective conception, and in the solidarity which is its natural condition. You appear to think that, besides the view you possess of truth as related to your cognition, you can from a position external to your own consciousness, contemplate it as related to other intelligences and as unrelated to yourself. If you try the experiment, its failure will soon demonstrate the fallacy of your opinion. No doubt the definition of all truth as entirely individual seems at first sight to detract from its position as being the common possession of humanity, but the appearance is deceptive. The common unbroken consciousness of each is a guarantee of the objective truth of which they are all joint partakers. To illustrate my meaning, suppose, *e.g.* that twelve men, two of whom were suffering from defective vision, were scanning a distant object. The ten whose eyesight was healthy would probably all agree as to the form and nature of the object inspected—in other words, in the objective truth; and only the two whose sight was impaired—that is, whose consciousness was feeble or disturbed—would have reason to question the true discernment of the rest. Hence subjective unity and uniformity, in the case of all individuals organized alike, necessarily implies objective unity as well; and I agree with Trevor that Twofold Truth can only be truly Skeptical when it involves a disruption of the individual consciousness.

ARUNDEL. I understand your standpoint, but am still of opinion that its tendency is to weaken objective truth. Your ratiocination makes all truth dependent on the individual recognition of it. Now, in my humble opinion, I have some power of apprehending truth as existing absolutely. I know, *e.g.* what unconditional morality means, and I think I possess some idea of intellectual truths with which I have never come into personal relation. Besides, if you limit the Skepticism of double-truth to the individual consciousness, you ought in consistency to go a step further and to affirm that

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all Skepticism consists not in the disruption of the general mass of verities acknowledged by mankind, nor in any disparity between the individual and the community of which he forms a part, so much as in a subjective dualism in his own consciousness.

TREVOR. We are discussing the point at which double-truth becomes indubitably Skeptical. We maintain it is so when it dissolves the unity of the individual consciousness, and that it is only by effecting this that it can impair the common stock of human beliefs—what you term objective truth. You reply that you can conceive absolute objective truth. Well, so can I. I conceded so much in my paper. But in what way? Only through the medium of my intellect, and by means of its tendency to determine truths as absolutely necessary of which I cannot conceive the negation. What you are really contending against, and what Harrington and I are defending, is the relativity of all knowledge. Your absolute knowledge, if you analyze it, can be nothing else than the extension, amplification, intensification, and the absolu-faction (if I may coin a word) of your own personal knowledge, unless indeed you were to maintain—which I know you do not—that knowledge may be intuitive and supernatural. As to Twofold Truth in others, we can only judge of a man's belief by his overt profession of faith. If, on that profession being produced, we find it disparate, revealing clear incompatibilities, we may characterize the man as a Skeptic. Let us turn, *e.g.* once more to Pomponazzi and his biform belief in immortality. If we try to realize the state of mind implied by a scientific dissent, and a religious assent on the same subject and at the same time, we must admit—such at least is my own opinion—that it involves on that issue a disruption of consciousness, though I do not say that he must necessarily have recognised it as such.

MISS LEYCESTER. It does not appear to me that the dualism of Pomponazzi must needs have been of that incompatible character you suppose. Why may not his standpoint have been this: what he could not yield to the demonstrations of philosophy he yielded to the *ipse dixit* of Revelation? Indeed, I wanted to suggest how far that kind of dualism

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may be called double-truth. Now, I happen to know not a few thoughtful people who certainly would be greatly scandalized to find themselves called Skeptics in the sense of dual-thinkers, and yet who distinctly acknowledge the irreconcilable antagonism between the dictates of reason and the claims of ecclesiastical Christianity, but who yield an assent to the latter as *dicta* of Revelation.

TREVOR. An assent to a mere *ipse dixit*, especially when employed to override ordinary experience, the ethical instincts of humanity, or the general laws of the universe, is always a rash proceeding, totally unworthy of any man who calls himself a philosopher. Indeed, an adherence to a mere *ipse dixit* is an act of intellectual suicide impossible to a reasoning being, for he must needs reason on the claims of the *dictum* before he yields his assent.

ARUNDEL. An argument which might be called the Roman Catholic pervert's *cul-de-sac*, admitting neither egress nor regress. Nevertheless, part of your paper, Doctor, reminded me unpleasantly of Dr. Newman's 'Grammar of Assent'—or, as I have heard it called, 'Grammar of Dissent.' There was something approaching to Jesuitical casuistry in your discrimination of intellectual and emotional beliefs. For my part, I do not think we can insist too strongly on ingenuousness, simplicity, and directness where our beliefs are concerned. Belief is assent to a truth as truth. It can be no more than that, and it should be no less. I don't say that religious beliefs ought not to have an element of emotion in them, but I demur to the possibility of belief in the sense of assured conviction being exclusively emotional.

TREVOR. In the discrimination I made between intellectual and emotional conviction, I was treating of minds constituted somewhat differently from yours and mine. That conviction may exist based entirely on grounds of feeling, sentiment, devout intuition, general fitness, adaptation to personal needs whether real or imaginary, no student of mental phenomena could, I think, well deny. But I agree with you that an assent to a belief on pure grounds of feeling is imperfect.

MISS LEYCESTER. Well, if you will allow me to say so,

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I think you are both wrong. I maintain that a man may possess knowledge or conviction, and that, too, of a most valuable kind, based entirely on the feelings, and even refusing the alliance or co-operation of the Reason as an incongruous and embarrassing intrusion. At least, I claim to know certain truths entirely by feeling and instinct, and in point of conscious certitude I can discern no difference between these and others which I have attained by ratiocination.

HARRINGTON. In that case you should modify your terminology. 'To know' is one thing, 'to feel' another; and if your assurance is based on sentiment, it is, I contend, no more than a feeling, and should be so described. I agree with Trevor that Schleiermacher's relegation of all religious belief to the region of the sentiment and emotion is a mischievous exaggeration of an undoubted truth. Reason and Faith have often been termed the two supports of a wise man's creed; amputate either, and you make locomotion impossible.

MISS LEYCESTER. I wish, Charles, that of the two supports you speak of, one were not so often a wooden leg. I mean Reason, whenever it proves itself to be arrogant, hard, insensate, and unbending, allowing little or no play to devotional needs, instincts, and feelings.

ARUNDEL. But do I understand you to maintain, Miss Leycester, that there may exist purely emotional creeds, so that it should be open to a man to allege: I believe in such dogmas emotionally, but not intellectually? In that case, whenever a man was confronted by intellectual difficulties, instead of trying to solve them reasonably he might incontinently flee to emotion.

MISS LEYCESTER. Supposing his intellect to be unequal to the solution, why should he not? Why might not the man who has vainly attempted by reason to find out God affirm His existence by simple intuition or feeling? Does not Christianity itself appeal to feeling in preference to intellect? What else is the meaning of the oft-quoted words, 'We walk by faith, and not by sight'?

ARUNDEL. No doubt there is a religious conviction which is generated and sustained by spiritual apperception, to use

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Coleridge's terminology; but even that is inferior, in my opinion, to rational certitude. The faith which is destitute of all intellectual bases of assurance cannot be said to possess the attributes of solidarity and permanence, and my interpretation of the words you have quoted would incorporate among the constituents of Faith the ratiocination needed to give it body and substance. Moreover, Faith in its relation to sight includes, I take it, *all* metaphysical grounds of belief as opposed to physical sensations.

HARRINGTON. We must not confound intuition with emotion. The former we may define as an unconditional postulate, made by the intellect to satisfy needs which are mainly intellectual, or to affirm a conclusion partly established by ratiocination. With feeling it has only in common the attribute of being a direct deliverance of consciousness. The scope of emotion in religion it would, of course, be absurd to deny; but it is clear to me that both its scope and influence may easily become exaggerated and mischievous, especially in certain conjunctures in the history of human thought. Most sections of Christians seem in theory to place all their dogmas upon that foundation. The contemptuous use of the word Rationalism by all classes of orthodox Christians, as indicating a mode of thought which they both fear and despise, is a sufficing proof of that. One division of the Christian world has erected subjective emotion into a personal infallibility as arbitrary and dictatorial as the *ex cathedrâ* pronouncements of the Papacy. Another has petrified it into ritual on Selden's principle of 'Rhetoric turned into Logic,' but in both cases there is a similar distrust of ratiocination. As a result, we witness the gradual sundering of religion and science—the dualism of the present day—which theologians affect to deplore, but for which they are primarily responsible. They seem as loth as ever to believe that reasoning beings must have a rational basis for their convictions, if the latter are expected to be stable and permanent.

TREVOR. I remember once seeing the outlines of an essay on the effect which the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith has had in retarding the growth of modern

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science and philosophy in Europe, by the exaggerated impulse which it gave to emotional religion. That it had such a result is shown by the distrust of secular knowledge of every kind evinced by those sects of Christians that have laid especial stress upon that dogma, *e.g.* the Herrnhüter in Germany, the Jansenists in France, the Methodists and Evangelicals in England. Of course, the doctrine has also its beneficent aspects. The individualism which is its necessary outcome has powerfully co-operated in the cause of religious liberty.

ARUNDEL. I observed, Doctor, what appeared to be a remarkable inconsistency in your paper. You inveighed vehemently against the unison and solidarity of the mind when it was determinedly dogmatic, as, *e.g.* in the case of Pascal; but yet you made the indivisibility of the consciousness the standpoint whence you condemned Twofold Truth. Are we to take this divergency as an involuntary homage to the subject of your paper?

TREVOR. The divergency is only apparent. The solidarity of the intellect against which I protested is that which claims to be based on and to realize objective truth; which assumes, generally in some violent manner, that because a man has attained assured convictions he must needs be in harmony with all ultimate truth, that his position is a convergency of all dogmatic infallibilities. It is also mainly volitional—a predetermination to arrive at a foregone conclusion. The synthesis is thus vitiated by dogmatic prejudice, either extraneous or inherent. But the synthesis which suffices to condemn double-truth is the ordinary static harmonious condition of a well-balanced intellect, conscious of no antagonism which may not be wisely left to its own natural incertitude, and pledged to no dogmatic finality of any kind.

ARUNDEL. But may we not have, as Miss Leycester once suggested, an 'instability of the homogeneous' in intellectual formations? And have you not often remarked that all mental movement begins with Skeptical distrust, which is clearly a disruption of the intellect?

TREVOR. No doubt I have often said so; nor do I grant

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that there is any inconsistency between that standpoint and the truth I am now urging. The disruption of Skeptical minds may be only temporary, but in every case its logical sequence is suspense or at least non-affirmation, whereas double-truth affirms two contradictory propositions, and is *ipso facto* doubly dogmatic. The Skeptical character of such a position is indirectly derived from the fact that it is inconceivable, and that one of the poles of the antagonism may always be employed in controverting the other.

MISS LEYCESTER. I came across the other day an interesting example of that peculiar intellectual mobility which delights in transition from one extreme of conviction to its opposite. I noted it down at the time as bearing directly on our subject. Here is the self-diagnosis of the thinker in question [reading from her pocket-book]: 'I don't quite know whether to esteem it a blessing or a curse, but whenever an opinion to which I am a recent convert, or which I do not hold with the entire force of my intellect, is forced too strongly upon me, or driven home to its logical conclusion, or over-praised or extended beyond its proper limits, I recoil instinctively and begin to gravitate towards the other extreme, sure to be in time repelled by it also.'[1] I suppose, Dr. Trevor, you would class such a thinker among minds constitutionally vacillating, as, *e.g.* Justus Lipsius.

TREVOR. Without knowing more of the thinker in question I could hardly tell you. His intellect seems to have close affinities with the 'double-eyed' minds who, distrustful of finality, are perpetually occupied in revising their beliefs; but in any case the instance is one strictly belonging to our subject, and showing in what multiform variety dualism exists in the human mind.

ARUNDEL. We may have 'double-truth,' I suppose, both in philosophy and in ethics, but I should be glad if you would tell me, Harrington, as an admirer of John Stuart Mill, why the same rule that applies to philosophical dualism is not also applicable to ethical. Mill, *e.g.* thought it possible that geometrical axioms might be different in other parts of the universe from what we know them to be here.

[1] *Stray Studies*, by T. R. Green, p. 8, *à propos* of Mr. Edward Denison.

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Now, why should he have insisted on that, and yet been so angry with Mr. Mansel for saying that God's view of morality might be different from our own? If the known cannot be made the measure of the unknown, should not the rule be applied to subjects of thought and conduct alike?

HARRINGTON. Not necessarily. Mill's object, I take it, in denying that our experience should be the ultimate standard of all knowledge, was to avoid finality in speculation and philosophy. But no man recognised more fully than he did, that finality in moral practice has long been attained by civilized humanity. He also recognised the fact that a determination of the limits of knowledge, however remote, was just as mischievous for genuine truth-search as indeterminate ethical practice was hurtful to the interests of social and political well-being. His reasoning is based upon and, in my judgment, amply justified by utilitarian principles, though I myself should have endeavoured to incorporate with them, perhaps inconsistently, the higher standpoint furnished by unconditional morality. Either is equally destructive of Mr. Mansel's immoral antinomy.

TREVOR. I would go further, and say that Mr. Mansel's adoption of such a theory in ethics is an *à fortiori* proof that he was also a believer in speculative 'double-truth,' however much he might have sought to disguise it. Indeed, I would undertake to prove—due space and time being granted—that this represents his general philosophical standpoint. We may in passing note it as a remarkable fact that the keenest thinker among modern English theologians found himself obliged, in view of the rivalry of faith and reason, to take up an antinomical position, which, as we have seen, is only indirect Skepticism.

HARRINGTON. Incidentally, Doctor, you have just touched upon a subject with which your paper did not sufficiently deal, but which I regard as one of its principal lessons—I mean the unconquerable aversion of all original minds to excessive dogma, especially in matters as to which human knowledge is impossible. It might tend to moderate the zeal of dogmatists of all kinds, religious, philosophical, and scientific, if they were to ponder the fact that rather than be

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compelled, physically or morally, to accept untenable theories, thinkers will take refuge in such transparent evasions and self-delusive hypotheses as are furnished by extreme forms of double-truth. Curiously, the position taken by Mill as to intellectual and moral double-truth has been exactly reversed by the Church of Rome, for she has as often affirmed the unity of intellectual as denied that of practical and ethical truth. The casuistry of Jesuits supplies us with the most outrageous applications of double-truth that we have in history.[1] The mischiefs that have resulted from this ethical antinomy, for which the term Jesuitism has become a synonym, fully justify Mill's distinction. It is, however, a little curious to find intellectual vindicated against moral truth by the greatest Christian Church in Europe, while the assertion of the superior claims of morality is left to a Skeptical philosopher.

MRS. HARRINGTON. You have not noticed the mention of Hamlet that occurred in the paper as a morbidly constituted mind, who would feel repelled at an excess of demonstration. What an infinite vista of possibilities of dissidence is offered us by the reflection that men might reasonably take offence, not at a lack, but a superfluity of demonstration.

MISS LEYCESTER. I don't know why Hamlet should be termed morbidly constituted on that account. To me the tendency appears quite normal and usual. I should be inclined to say that in half the cases in which dissent from dogma becomes established, the initiatory stage is repugnance to its assumed omniscience, its exuberant infallibility. Take any largely received account of matters inherently beyond human quest, *e.g.* the articles of the Westminster Confession, and what is most repellent in these dogmas is their portentous magnitude of knowledge. We are staggered by the too assertory character of the belief, as Hamlet was by the plain directness of the duty. I think the secret ground of such dissatisfaction, both of speculative and practical

[1] Comp. the fifth and sixth letters of Pascal's *Provinciale*; and on Pascal's own standpoint in this matter see Reuchlin's *Pascal's Leben*, pp. 206-208, and the Pascal chapter in this work.

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doubters, is a persuasion that these intrusive truths, these too simple explanations of profound mysteries, are anomalous. They are pictures made up of all light and no shadow, and we resent their intrusion and demand for recognition as imputations on our knowledge of a world in which shadows are necessary concomitants of light.

ARUNDEL. In other words, Miss Leycester, a man may decline to receive as a truth the proposition 2 + 2 are 4, because of its excess of demonstration. Certainly, if we are to allow this as an operative cause of Skepticism, there will never be a dearth of Skeptics in the world.

TREVOR. But the very point you mention has itself been denied by thinkers as illustrious as Sokrates. For that matter, it would be difficult to name any proposition or fact so obvious that it has never encountered either doubt or denial.

HARRINGTON. I should account for the phenomena we are discussing, not by supposing that there is any real antipathy to demonstration in any sane mind, but by remembering that in certain men the volitional interest preponderates over the intellectual. What such persons dislike is the irresistible coercion of the will *ab extra*, without allowing due scope for ratiocination or discussion. Hamlet, *e.g.* would have liked to debate on his duty for ever, and he is angry with the peremptoriness that refuses to concede this right of interminable discussion.

TREVOR. Your explanation will serve for practical Skeptics—the class to which Hamlet belongs. Intellectual doubters seem to me determined by other considerations—*e.g.* the infinity of speculation. Men of this type dislike finality above everything, and the moment you propound to them an indisputable truth, they seek either to evade it or to imagine a condition of things in which it would not be true; or, failing every other expedient, they ask why it should be true. To many persons existence itself is the profoundest and most inexplicable of riddles.

ARUNDEL. You have just admitted a truth on which I have often insisted—that Skeptics are the irreconcilables of philosophy, and most unreasonably demand 'better bread than

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can be made of wheat.' . . . But what is to be our final conclusion respecting the connection of double-truth with the Christian Revelation, and its permissibility in that connection as a mode of Skepticism?

TREVOR. With the simple teaching of Jesus Christ human reason can have little or no quarrel. The dichotomy of Faith and Reason presents itself to us in the gradual development of Ecclesiasticism, and in its speculative departure from the original ethical and spiritual impulse given it by Christ. The outcome of this truth consists in the fact that for most of the double-truth emanating from the irreconcilable antagonism of Reason and Faith, for its excesses, its equivocations, its ambiguities, its contradictions, dogma is primarily responsible.

. . . . . .

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EVENING VII.

RELATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO FREE-THOUGHT.

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'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth?'

JOHN xviii. 37, 38.

'The complete self-surrender of the reason is a partially impossible and *wholly* self-deceptive operation. In this endeavour men act unconsciously on the principle of Ananias. Pretending to resign their whole intellect to a creed or dogma, they still by an uncontrollable instinct "keep back part of the price."'

ANON.

'Granting that Christianity is the pure truth, who will answer for it that the orthodoxy which prevails at any one time is equivalent with pure Christianity?'

CHALYBAUS, *Speculative Philosophy* (Eng. trans.), p. 419.

'If schisms and heresies were traced up to their original causes, it would be found that they have sprung chiefly from the multiplying articles of faith and narrowing the bottom of religion by clogging it with creeds and catechisms and endless niceties about the essences, properties, and attributes of God.'

LOCKE, *Life by Fox-Bourne*, i. p. 149.

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EVENING VII.

THE RELATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO FREE-THOUGHT.

THE next meeting of our Literary Society was held in the middle of October. The day appointed fell on a Wednesday, and on the Sunday before the Harringtons, with Miss Leycester, came to spend the day with the Trevors, and accompanied the Doctor and Miss Trevor to Hilderton Church.

The Sunday was the eighteenth after Trinity, and Mr. Arundel, whose invariable custom was to choose for his text some portion of the epistle or gospel, chanced that morning to take as his subject the words, 'On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.' His sermon turned mainly on the simplicity of the gospel as laid down by Christ, in contradistinction (1) to the minute elaboration of religious and human duty on the part of the Pharisees, against whom these words were directed; (2) as related to needless and abstruse refinements of doctrine and ritual which unhappily characterized some Christian Churches.

These preliminary remarks will enable the reader to understand the discussion on the Wednesday.

When the company were assembled on that day in Harrington's study, the host began:

I don't suppose you intended it, Arundel, but your sermon last Sunday morning was an appropriate introduction to our subject to-night—'The relation of Christianity to Free-Thought.'

ARUNDEL. I certainly did not intend it. The sermon you heard was written some years ago, and you are aware of my custom of choosing my subject from the epistle or gospel, at least in the morning.

MISS LEYCESTER. Oh, we all liked the sermon very

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much, as we told you last Sunday; but there was one point in it to which I myself should have taken exception.

ARUNDEL. Only one, Miss Leycester? Then I consider myself singularly fortunate. I can imagine few sermons to which more than one exception might not fairly be taken by critical and cultured hearers. But may I ask what the inculpated point was?

MISS LEYCESTER. Well, I thought you insisted too much on the literal meaning of 'This is the first and greatest commandment,' as if the priority thus indicated by Christ were intrinsic and unconditional instead of being, as I take it, the numerical precedence which it has in virtue of its being the summary of the first four of the Ten Commandments; the result being a stress on religious as above moral duty, which, I think, is not sanctioned by Christ's teaching, taking it altogether. Indeed, I consider such an inference disproved by the remarkable clause in the same passage, 'The second is like unto it,' of which the meaning, I suppose, is, whatever sanctions and obligations the first commandment may have, those of the second are in no wise inferior to them.

ARUNDEL. I frankly acknowledge the substantial justice of your criticism, the more so because I agree with you that Christ distinctly subordinated religious to ethical duties. Indeed, I have always regarded that fact, provided it is not overstrained or exaggerated, as the crowning glory of Christianity. At the same time you must bear in mind that a preacher has to consider, not the bearings of his sermon on a select few among his hearers who may happen to be educated and thoughtful, but on the great majority of his congregation; and I tried to impress upon my poor people their duty to God so as to quicken in some degree their spiritual life. This appeal to emotion is precisely the ground in a rustic congregation which best rewards cultivation. I need not remind you of the truism that the uneducated are better led by their feelings than their reason, and I cannot find, taking the country labourers as a class, that they are so deficient in ethical insight or so regardless of moral obligation as to warrant the continual urging of the superiority

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of ethical over religious duty. Indeed, considering their temptations and circumstances, I think their betters might often take example from them.

HARRINGTON. I am inclined to think you are right, Arundel. I should never be afraid of your appeal to the emotional faculty becoming excessive, or that you could, even if you tried, leave the reason and intellect long out of consideration. The point in your sermon which I noted as falling in with the paper I am about to read was the emphasis you laid on the two commandments considered as the chief foundations of Christian belief and practice, and the bearing which Jesus Christ's selection of those two points from the old Jewish Law has on the question, 'What is Revelation?'

MISS TREVOR. I must defend Mr. Arundel from any charge of ignoring moral duties as the prime conditions of a Christian life. But his preaching, I may add, is considered deficient in its completely ignoring 'Church principles;' at least such is the opinion of some lady friends of mine.

ARUNDEL. Long may my poor sermons labour under a defect so meritorious! 'Church principles' have an awkward way—like other things and persons attached to churches—of ignoring Christ Himself, their ostensible Founder. The deficiency you mention, and to which I am proud to plead guilty, reminds me of an incident which occurred to me not long since. . . . I went to the opening of —— Church, when the Bishop of —— preached. His sermon, as you may suppose, was emphatically liberal and Christian, dwelling on the fewness and simplicity of those dogmas which are really essential to Christianity. Going out of church I asked a clerical acquaintance how he liked the bishop's sermon. 'Not bad,' was the reply; 'but it might have been preached anywhere and by anybody. It did not contain a single distinctive Church principle from beginning to end; in fact,' he added in a tone which clearly evinced his opinion that the contingency propounded was the severest possible condemnation of the sermon, 'Cicero might have preached it.' 'So, for that matter,' was my reply, 'he might the Sermon on the Mount or the Parable of the Good Samaritan.'

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MISS LEYCESTER. Charles has told us that he considers Mr. Arundel's sermon as having thrown light on Christ's own answer to the question, What is Revelation? I want him to tell us what he thinks that answer would be.

HARRINGTON. On its Divine side Christ would, I think, define it as 'the Perpetual Revealing of the Father's mind,' which, on its human side and in its largest acceptation, we might interpret as 'The Discovery of Truth.' I meant that by insisting on that succinct epitome of the Law of Moses as constituting the basis of His own teaching, He clearly proclaimed that He did not consider that teaching so thoroughly novel as to differ in kind from every other exposition of truth which had been presented to mankind. Every religion that taught duty to God and love to man He would no doubt have called Divine and true, and would have regarded it as essentially Christian. One of the noblest attributes in Christ's character was His preference of principles over forms, persons, and externalities of every kind.

ARUNDEL. I agree with your definition, which I do not understand to imply that Christ added nothing to the Judaism which existed before Him. That, I think, would be false. The Fatherhood of God, the impartiality of His providential dealings, the duty of love to men irrespective of creed or nationality, were certainly new elements in Semitic religious thought. I say this with a full recollection of the teachings of such men as Hillel and others who preceded Him.

TREVOR. The idea of Revelation as a continuous communication of God's will is indigenous to all Semitic races. But it was just these new elements of a universalist cosmopolitan nature which Christ superadded to the old Mosaism, that adapted His faith to become, as it has, the religion of the cold, keen, inquiring intellects of our Western Indo-European races. Hence, for my own part I have always regarded Christianity, by reason of the simplicity of its doctrines, the sublime humanitarianism of its ethics, and its generally comprehensive character, as peculiarly qualified to become the creed of all races and individuals who are bent on intellectual progress, and are yet not unmindful that such progress does not include all the true interests of

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humanity. I have always thought it not the least among 'Evidences of Christianity,' albeit not included in popular text-books on the subject, that it is the only form of Semitic religion which has commended itself to the feelings and understandings of the most cultivated sections of the Aryan race. The influence of the two remaining forms of Semitic religion—Judaism and Islamism—on our Western races has been comparatively little. Hence we have the mission of the Semitic races as laid down by Bunsen and others, viz. they are the divinely appointed purveyors of religion for their Aryan fellow-men. To translate the Semitic into the Japhetic—the precise operation which Jesus Christ commenced—constitutes, as Baron Bunsen said, one great religious need of our time: I do not say it is the only one.

MISS LEYCESTER. If I were a great painter I should like to represent Semiticism, with its religious enthusiasm, its attitude of devotion, its childlike simplicity and trust, by Mary of Bethany, with her absorbed concentration on the words of the great Teacher; while the restless, dissatisfied, inquiring Skeptical nature of Aryan speculation would be appropriately represented by Martha, 'careful and troubled about many things.'

ARUNDEL. We may add, I think, that the Master's decision of one thing being needful has an application to philosophy as well as to practical religion; I mean the categorical imperative of simple faith and obvious duty which is left after the intellect has exercised all its disintegrating and destructive influences.

TREVOR. You have a still more striking example of the contrast between Semitic faith and Indo-Germanic unfaith in the well-known scene of Christ before Pilate. The Jew's devout belief in the sanctity and vitality of truth, his single-hearted and heroic determination to pursue it at all costs, compared with the Roman's cynical and indifferent 'What is truth?' has always appeared to me very remarkable. The scene is the typical confronting of two diverse races, each with its own peculiar instincts, ideals, and destinies.

HARRINGTON. On the other hand, Doctor, if you make

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that scene so typically important, Pilate's interrogation must signify not the cynical disdain but the eager inquiry for truth which we have agreed is the characteristic of the cultivated Indo-Germanic intellect. Nor must we forget that the teaching of Christ stands midway between the devout though narrow religiousness of the older Judaism and the broader and more comprehensive spirit of the newer Gentile world destined to succeed it. The very stress on truth in that passage as an ideal object of pursuit and of a martyr's testimony, is a notion the old Jewish prophet would hardly have understood, for with him truth was a purely Jewish, Palestinian, and theological quality descriptive of his worship as contrasted with the falsity and vanity of idols. . . . Our present subject, however, is not Judaism but Christianity.

MISS LEYCESTER. True; and the bare mention of it conjures up as with a magician's wand the host of difficulties that surround it. For what, among the fluctuations and changes of the eighteen centuries of its existence, and among the hundreds of sects which style themselves by the common name of Christian, shall we say is Christianity? As to the relation of dominant systems of Christianity to Freethought, it has generally been the unhappy one between a despot and a slave.

HARRINGTON. There can be no question to any thoughtful and independent intellect as to the true definition of Christianity. It is—the Life and Words of Christ. In this first simple and pure form, as you will find when I come to read my paper, Christianity is so far from opposing itself to rational freedom of thought that it may be said to be founded on it. It was a distinct declaration of liberty both intellectual and spiritual. Such is its first and best form. Afterwards, as we noticed in our last discussion, it came to assume a very different aspect when it developed into an elaborate system of speculative dogma and imperious ecclesiasticism.

ARUNDEL. I deprecate as strongly as any man dogmatic tyranny and intolerance. Still, there is something to be said for the undoubted need of doctrinal development. Religious feelings, for example, are uncertain in origin and

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evanescent in operation if left entirely to themselves without a prescribed track or direction being assigned them. Besides, they must perforce find some mode of visible expression if they are to be made the motive forces or the connecting links of any ecclesiastical or other community. A Church without a creed is as inconceivable as a nationality without laws; but the ecclesiastical as well as the civil ruler should remember that his object is best attained when the personal liberty of the individual is most respected. There must always be, so long as creeds are words and men are reasoning beings, a variety of interpretation and opinion as to the essentials or non-essentials of any religious faith. The frequently quoted maxim attributed to Augustine is epigrammatic and pretty: *In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus charitas*, but it leaves the main difficulty unsolved. What are *necessaria*, and why? and what is the boundary line between *dubia* and *necessaria*? Certainly the *necessaria* which can be gathered from the direct utterances of Jesus Christ may be packed in a very small dogmatic parcel.

MISS LEYCESTER. I have often thought what a different answer—different in spirit and in form—would have been given to the question, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' by Hildebrand on the one hand or Calvin on the other, compared with the simple injunction of clear duty to God and man, and the noble inculcation of unsectarian charity which it elicited from Jesus Christ. On the other hand, I have sometimes reversed the process, *i.e.* I have tried to extract from the developed form of one of the most dogmatic sections of Christianity—I mean the Church of Rome—what the logical and consistent idea of the founder of such a system could be; in other words, I tried to conceive the Teacher of whom Hildebrand, Alexander VI., Leo X., and Julius II. could claim to be the legitimate and worthy vicars. I need not say that in the attempt Jesus of Nazareth, with His wise, gentle, loving teachings, quite disappeared, and what seemed to occupy His place was a hideous compound of Jewish High Priest, a Grand Inquisitor, and an Oriental despot.

ARUNDEL. In other words, Miss Leycester, you tried to

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discover the acorn in the oak of some centuries' growth. I don't think you can feel surprised that you did not find it.

MISS LEYCESTER. At least I had a right to expect that 'the oak of some centuries' growth' was actually bearing acorns, and not some gaudy-looking but poisonous berry. I could not have anticipated that the acorn would have produced a Upas Tree, or as Dante expressed the metamorphosis which befell—

> La buona pianta:
> Che fu già vite, ed ora è fatta pruno.[1]

The spirit of Christianity may doubtless exist in a variety of forms, just as you may have a jewel in a variety of settings. What I complain of is the wilful abstraction of the precious stone of Christ's own teaching, and the substitution of the base imitation of hierarchical pride and ambition.

MRS. ARUNDEL. But agreeing, as we all do, that the Revelation of Jesus Christ is Divine, does not every criticism and examination of it become by the very fact profane?

TREVOR. Your query, Mrs. Arundel, is important, because it bears immediately on our subject. It is equivalent to asking what right have Christians to be Skeptical, *i.e.* inquiring. Now, however great be the proofs and sanctions of any given Revelation considered as an unveiling of Divine Truth, there clearly can be none so great or so obvious as to render a searching scrutiny of those proofs impertinent or needless. The power we possess of doing this—the irresistible impulse implanted in most men of employing this power, not to mention the unworthy superstitions held in every age of the world by those who have neglected to use it, constitute sufficing proofs of this necessity. Regarding Revelation as light, we might, without venturing far into the teleological aspect of the question, say that light presupposes the faculty of seeing. Sight is, at least, a correlative of light, and together with the power of apprehending light there must exist the faculty of apprehending its different degrees, kinds, and qualities. Similarly the very idea of Revelation presupposes the power not only of acknowledging but of testing and

[1] *Paradiso*, canto xxiv.

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analyzing it. The truth disclosed and unveiled must be of such a kind as we are able to apprehend, else it is no truth at all. Indeed, the duty of being able to give a reason for our faith is increased and enhanced in the direct ratio of its ostensible importance, so that the greater the magnitude of its claims the more imperative on our part becomes the need of an inquiring, cautious, and, if necessary, suspensive attitude.

ARUNDEL. Pardon me, Doctor: your last proposition is something astounding. It is tantamount to saying, the brighter the sun shines the more evidence do I require of its brilliancy.

TREVOR. Nay, Arundel, you mistake my meaning. Let us suppose, *e.g.* that the sun required or was supposed to require the acknowledgment of every rational being living here or elsewhere in sight of its rays, that it was the only creative agency or source of vital energy in our own system. Should not we require some undeniable attestation of such a claim? What I meant by the magnitude of the *claims* of any Revelation was not the greatness of its light, but the degree of its general insistency on our submission and concurrence, which is quite another matter. I say, and deliberately maintain, that the more reverence and obedience a Revelation claims, the more complete and authentic should be the evidence that it merits it. Revelation, you must acknowledge, has rarely conceded so much to human weakness as to say, Believe in direct proportion to the light you enjoy. If it did this, Skepticism—or the aggressive or suspicious human reason—could have had no quarrel with it.

HARRINGTON. I quite agree with you. The claim generally made on behalf of Revelation to the unconditional assent of the Reason fully justifies a searching inquiry into its validity. From our own point of view such a claim professes to be a title-deed to the most sacred territory in the possession of humanity. It demands, or is held to demand, the surrender of our greatest wealth. It could hardly be expected that men who have realized the value of their mental possessions should quietly yield them up without an attempt to ascertain the validity of such a demand, or to examine the

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basis on which it is founded. On this subject I should like to read to you a few sentences I came across the other day in Bailey's 'Essay on the Pursuit of Truth.'[1] After speaking of the need of full inquiry in other classes of truths, he proceeds: 'Not less imperative reasons exist why we should diligently apply ourselves to the examination of the authenticity and import of any alleged communication from God to mankind that wears the least semblance of credibility. To neglect inquiry under these circumstances would not only be a breach of the manifest duty arising out of the relation of a creature to his Creator, but it would plunge ourselves into those evils which an unacquaintance with accessible knowledge, and much more any positive errors on so momentous a subject, would be sure to bring, as well as to sacrifice all those benefits which would necessarily flow from the possession of the truth.' With this noble and high-minded standpoint I emphatically agree. In greater or less proportion a moral culpability seems to me to attach in every case to neglect of independent and impartial inquiry into whatsoever doctrine asserts a claim to our belief and adherence; in St. Paul's words, 'Whatsoever is not of faith,' *i.e.* personal conviction, 'is sin.'

MISS LEYCESTER. There is, moreover, another reason why the utmost liberty should be granted to the intellect to examine into and decide upon the merits of any given Revelation, *i.e.* its transmission necessarily through human agencies, therefore with all the liability to self-interest and error which such conditions imply.

TREVOR. Very true; but I was about to add to what I said just now that although in idea Revelation does not render needless or impertinent the fullest exercise of the Reason, yet in actuality, and (speaking especially of Christianity) by means of the erroneous construction put upon it by its teachers, it has undoubtedly exercised such a repressive influence, and that to a most mischievous extent. The various shifts to which the human intellect has been compelled to resort by means of such repression we have already considered, and further examples of the same truth will meet

[1] P. 24.

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us as we proceed in our task. Moreover, we shall find that the intolerance of the Christian Church in the Middle Ages was by no means exclusively confined to theological subjects. It was an unfortunate outcome of the position it assumed as comprehending all the intellectual culture and speculation of the time that the *animus* of the theologian should be found to affect in a certain measure even the philosopher and the man of science, nurtured and dieted as these were in a theological atmosphere and on theological food. Indeed, it is not the least of the many ill qualities of religious dogma that it makes all other dogmas which come in contact with it more 'dogged,' so to speak. For example, nothing could at first sight seem less calculated to provoke angry recriminations than some of the issues between Realists and Nominalists in the twelfth century. Questions of a similar kind had been debated by Greek philosophers without an approach to rancour or bitterness; but so violent in the schools of Paris was the feeling on these abstruse points that the partisans of Abelard and William of Champeaux actually came to blows.

MISS LEYCESTER. The thought has often occurred to me whether the excess of dogmatism which we find occasionally in contemporary scientists may not be ascribed in some cases to the theological training of those who are guilty of it. If this could be proved to be the case, it would be another illustration of the truth of your remarks.

ARUNDEL. But assuming that Skeptics, so far from being inimical to Revelation, as is generally supposed, are precisely the persons who treat its credentials as they ought to be treated—for that seems the point to which we are steering—is such Skepticism to pursue its course without let or hindrance? Suppose a Skeptic should be so advanced as to deny or hold in suspense the cardinal truths of Christ's own teaching, *e.g.* the existence of God—the providential government of the world—the obligation of moral duty—a future life—would it not be absurd to say that his Skepticism was compatible with Christianity, and an impious mockery to affirm that such conclusions could be based upon it?

HARRINGTON. Your objection, Arundel, is easily answered:

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1. As we saw in the case of Sokrates, sincere and inquiring unbelief is better than insincere and ignorant belief. 2. Of the thousands who, starting from Skepticism (for every free and independent inquiry begins with doubt), have submitted Christianity to a rigid examination, how many, may we suppose, have proceeded in the path of negative criticism till they were landed in Atheism or Immorality—the denial of the two great commandments of the Gospel? If we could arrive at reliable statistics on the point, we should find, I suspect, a very small percentage of such extreme Skeptics. Free-inquiry, like religious faith, must trust to a certain extent to human prudence and discretion—attributes unluckily not innate in every child of Adam. If therefore inquiry degenerates into irrational libertinism, or faith finds congenial repose in crass ignorance or degrading superstition, we must accept both extremes as so far proof of the value and truthfulness of the golden mean.

TREVOR. Another answer might not unfairly be suggested to Arundel, though after his recent declarations on the point he is not likely to avail himself of it, *i.e.* the similarity between the Probabilism of the Academic Skeptic and the persuasion of likelihood which most rational divines (Bishop Butler, *e.g.*) hold is the most that can be urged for articles of faith. . . . Some relation might even be pleaded between the probability of divines as an imperfect certainty and the complete uncertainty which belongs to Pyrrhonism.

ARUNDEL. You are right in supposing that I utterly refuse to put faith and Pyrrhonism on the same level, even interpreting faith as equivalent only to probability, which I cannot accede to until I know the degree of probability of which this equivalence is maintained. There is a considerable difference, as you have already allowed, between probability and suspense. Probability of any degree is a distinct inclination of one side of the balance, while suspense implies a fixed and rigid equilibrium.

HARRINGTON. The Doctor has, however, just suggested a point of some importance—I mean the connection between the usual theological definition of faith as a condition of imperfect certitude and some states of Skepticism. Consider-

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able ignorance and misconception seem to me to exist upon this subject; for while theologians discriminate in theory between faith and knowledge, in reality they regard objects of faith as demonstrable and infallible. 'We walk by faith, not by sight,' is a text often on their lips, but the moment you dare to impute the smallest degree of blindness or imperfect vision as to the objects of their belief you immediately arouse their indignation. Le-Vayer, one of our Skeptics, thought the words 'The just shall live by his faith' might signify that Skeptical philosophers, animated by disinterested regard for truth, should guide themselves by considerations of likelihood while distinctly acknowledging perfect certitude to be impossible. We have already touched upon this subject in our last discussion as a common meeting point of faith and Skepticism. I hope we may be able to discuss it more fully in the course of our future researches; meanwhile I will ask your attention to my paper on the Relation of Christianity to Free-thought.

. . . . . .

In commencing my essay it seems expedient to define the object I propose to myself, the best means of attaining that object, and the limits within which our inquiry should be kept. In a preceding chapter we considered some varieties of Free-thought, which were, however, either ancient or foreign products, at least in origin. What we endeavour to do in the last and present discussion is to consider the general bearings of what may be called Christian Skepticism, for all of the distinguished names remaining on our list are, if not Christians in the usual acceptation of the term, products of a condition of thought into which Christianity very largely enters. It seems right, therefore, that we should inquire into the relation of that factor with different forms of Free-thought. The question must be answered, Does Christianity, properly defined, forbid freedom of inquiry, or does it allow it? In either case, is the prohibition or permission absolute or relative, unlimited or strictly defined? What was the relation of Jesus Christ's teaching to the ordinary beliefs and convictions of those to whom it was first addressed? Had it a solvent or hardening tendency? Was it regarded as dogmatic or undogmatic, as tending to confirm existing beliefs, or to question, criticize, and destroy them? What effect had Jesus Christ's teaching on His reputation while He lived, and on the

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causes which contributed, humanly speaking, to His premature death? An impartial answer to these questions will, it seems to me, enable us to define the relation of Christianity to Free-thought, and will help us to determine, when we come to consider diverse manifestations of Skepticism, how far they diverge from the latitude of speculation permitted in the first conception of Christianity by its founder.

But I must first preface a few observations on the method I intend to pursue in this inquiry. We have already agreed that Christianity is most properly defined as consisting of the life and words of Christ. It is necessary to insist *in limine* on this as the only true and satisfactory definition. As we well know, the term covers in ordinary acceptation an enormous extent of ground, historical and doctrinal. Few general definitions of religious or thought-movements include a greater variety of manifestation. The historical growth of eighteen centuries, each of them may claim not one but many various phases and modes of presentation. The doctrinal development from a few simple precepts to several overgrown and elaborate systems of dogmatic teaching, each stage of growth of every such evolution presents us with a distinct phase or aspect, differing more or less from all the rest. Like Nature, Christianity is a term which includes a vast number of diverse phenomena, and is generally interpreted from the point of view or particular aspect it presents to each individual beholder.

That the ultimate fact of Christianity, considered as a distinct Revelation, is Christ Himself, may at first sight seem a truism, but it cannot be so deemed by those who are conversant with the modes of thought and speech common to Christian Churches and sects. In all these cases the authority claimed by Christ for His teaching, not on personal grounds, but as the embodiment of truth, is assumed to be delegated to different creeds and ecclesiastical communities, each of which claims to dogmatize and decree articles of faith with His sanction and in His name. As, however, their mutual differences are both profound and manifold, and as they all more or less evince no anxiety to assimilate their respective dogmas with the doctrines most pointedly insisted on by Christ, their claim to authority delegated from Him needs no refutation.

Years ago I found myself obliged to adopt Pascal's rule,[1] and to appeal on the question of Christian truth to the 'Tribunal of Jesus Christ'—for I may tell you that the inquiry I am now prosecuting is not altogether new to me. In early manhood, when freshly awakened thought and intellectual unrest first suggested to me

[1] See chapter on Pascal, in this work.

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doubts respecting some points of the Christian faith, I determined to satisfy myself as to the real essentials of that faith. In those days I was fresh from reading the Dialogues of Plato and Descartes' 'Treatise on Method.' I began to ask myself, why not apply the same method to other subjects in which synthesis and evolution might seem to have been carried to excess? What Descartes effected for his philosophical, why might I not attempt for my religious, creed? And if, as in the case of Christianity, religious belief has also an historical development, why not apply the same analysis to its history as well? The ultimate point of the historical inquiry might perhaps be found to coincide with the final irreducible principles—the *minimum quid inconcussum*—which my conscience assured me ought to distinguish every *true* belief. Thus I might also discover a religious '*cogito, ergo sum*'—a distinct foundation in consciousness for my faith as a Christian, and an indubitable point of departure for the doubtful and fluctuating development of Christianity in history. Accordingly, I set to work. The most salient presentations of Christianity to a thinker of the present day are no doubt the highly elaborated creeds and the complex and involved services of the Greek and Latin Churches, while next to these are the various divergences of Protestant and Dissentient sects. I began my researches with the latest developments of Romanism—the dogmas promulgated by Pius IX. There could be no difficulty with such extreme tenets as the Immaculate Conception and Papal Infallibility. On every ground of religion, culture, and morality they were clearly inadmissible. In the words which Giordano Bruno applied to the Romanist dogmas of his time—

> Humanam turbant pacem, seclique quietem;
> Extinguunt mentis lucem, neque moribus prosunt.

Tracing the stream upward, I soon came to the decrees of the Council of Trent, and the Catechism of Pius V. The dogmas embodied in these elaborate formulæ I quickly put aside. To say nothing of their mischievous and degrading tendency as positive injunctions, they were utterly devoid of the principle of rational and immediate obligation which I thought must characterize every truthful Revelation, without which I at least felt they could have no power over me. Step by step I plodded on my way, backward as to time, forward as to truth and genuine Christianity. Arriving at the Reformation, I came on the track of illustrious thinkers who, three centuries ago, adopted the course I was now pursuing; in other words, they had also attempted to trace the stream of

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Christianity backward, in order to arrive at its true source. I could not but be alive to the fact that the influence of such men as Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, and Zwingli, especially of the two latter, was primarily of an undogmatizing kind. Still I found ample reason for thinking that, with all their merits, and the services they rendered to Free-thought, they themselves suffered from the besetting sin of theology—I mean excessive dogma. They laid too much stress on speculative beliefs and elaborate formularies of faith as distinct from Christian practice. Nay, the very corner-stone of the Reformation—I mean the doctrine of justification by faith—they sometimes insisted on to an extent which was clearly subversive of all ethical conduct. The result was seen in the attempts both of Calvin and Luther to limit intellectual research, liberty of thought, and tolerance of alien beliefs within the bounds they chose to prescribe, and which they dignified by the name of orthodoxy. Nor were they above imitating the anti-Christian Church from which they had seceded in coercing, anathematizing, and occasionally putting to death those who were impervious to their reasoning and persuasion. I easily detected the error that had affected their study of Christian antiquity. In their search for pure, uncorrupted Christianity they had stopped considerably short of the fountain-head. This error I determined to avoid. So, leaving the Reformation, I pursued my historical course backwards, as if borne along by one of the mythical ἄνω ποταμῶν of the Greeks, through the Dialectics and puerilities of the Middle Ages, and the deeper darkness that preceded them, until at length I found myself among the early centuries of the history of the Church, and the Councils which had most contributed to the actual shaping the ecclesiastical creed of Christianity. In my summary sketch of my regressive progress I have not mentioned the phenomena I met on my route—the many outrages offered in the holy name of Christ to every form of intellectual liberty, and the disappearance one by one of the later dogmas of Papal Christianity. When I had, *e.g.* arrived at 400 A.D., almost half of the current beliefs of Roman Catholicism had vanished, while of many of those still left there was a distinctly marked advance from induration and stratification to a more soluble and semi-fluid condition. It was like watching the different stages of the same geological formation, tracing, *e.g.* coal-beds from their completely stratified condition to the tropical vegetation which gave them being; or, were it possible, piercing successive beds of chalk of lessening degrees of hardness, until we arrived at the Globigerina ooze which formed their primary condition. So the petrifaction of

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feeling into dogma, imagination into fact, rhetoric into logic, was distinctly manifested in each of their various stages. I cannot say that the lengthened study I thought it my duty to devote to the General Councils had at all the effect of predisposing me to accept their deliverances. On the other hand, the more I considered the questions they were convened to decide, the character of the personages lay and clerical who took part in them, the circumstances of their meeting, the disgraceful scenes enacted at many of them, the spirit which seemed to preside over their discussions and to dictate their decrees and conclusions, the less regard I seemed to have for the sanctity of their assemblages, or for the superior prudence or wisdom of their deliverances, while the plea of their inspiration by the Holy Spirit appeared either blasphemous or ironical. I therefore had no scruple in leaving them behind, and penetrating still further back to Apostolic times. Here I first began to see light. Christianity now assumed a distinctly different appearance. With the diminution of speculative beliefs there was more room for Christian duty, for Christian love, and for Christian freedom. With a lesser stress on unity of form there was more elasticity and simplicity in modes of worship. With the decrease of pride and hierarchical ambition in the rulers of the Church there was a greater approach to the humane spirit of its founder. At last a few stages further back brought me to the fountain-head. I was among the hearers of Jesus Christ at His first preaching in Galilee, and, lo! dogmatism as I had always understood it had quite disappeared. There was no longer a terrible insistency as a matter of life and death on a series of difficult speculative propositions; no longer an authoritative pronunciamiento of tenets on the most recondite of all subjects, to be received on pain of eternal punishment. The Church as a theocratic and dogmatic system had not only ceased to exist, but, from the standpoint of its founder, no room was left for the sacerdotalism which could develop into a theocracy, or for the abstruse speculation and sectarian exclusiveness which would needs ripen into a harsh system of dogma. The root-thought of Christ's system was virtue and morality. 'Love God and man. Do unto all men as you would have them do unto you. Show your love and duty to God by manifesting your love to His children and your brethren. Shun pride, ambition, selfishness, and follow humility and charity.' Such was the Christianity of Christ; and, for my part, I immediately assented. Bowing my head before the Divine truth of His teaching, I had no difficulty in admitting the Divinity of His person. I thus found the historical foundation of Christianity, its highest authoritative attestation, in

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the instincts of conscience. The external truth coincided and harmonized with its internal demonstration. No doubt I had heard those precepts of Christianity often before. Ostensibly they formed the practical teaching of most Christian Churches, but in those cases they were mostly so intermingled with other teachings of a speculative and formal kind as to present an entirely different appearance. The truth and excellence of Christ's ethical injunctions were assumed to be qualities not inherent in themselves, but dependent on other collateral conditions, formal, external, and ceremonial. The Confession of Faith was set so clearly above the practice of holiness that the latter could not but acquire by the mere juxtaposition a subordinate and inferior value, whereas in Christ's teaching it is moral practice, not the speculative belief, still less the religious observance, that is placed highest. 'Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of my Father.' The conclusion I then arrived at, and which subsequent reflection, so far from weakening, has immeasurably strengthened, was, in brief, that the first form of Christianity was practical not speculative; broad and comprehensive, not narrow and dogmatic; popular in its aims and instincts, not theocratic and hierarchical; simple in its observances, not elaborate and ritualistic. I cannot, however, pretend that these convictions were attained without some sacrifice of prior prepossessions and opinions. Beliefs long cherished, like habits strengthened by long usage, are not easily eradicated, or even modified. Nor can I say that my inquiry was accomplished in a short time, or that every step in the retrogression was taken consecutively. On the contrary, there were various delays, impediments, hesitations, before I came to the definitive conclusion that the best representative of Christianity is Christ Himself.

There is in the 'Nouveaux Mélanges' of Theodore Jouffroy a strikingly dramatic passage, in which he describes the conflict he once sustained with doubt, and in which the latter came off victorious. He narrates with much pathos and with evident sincerity how he had felt compelled in the imperious interests of truth to divest himself one after another of most of his long-cherished dogmas. But the dramatic interest of the passage, which reads as if the author in writing it had attempted to imitate the Apollyon and Christian conflict of the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' seems to me sustained by a departure from probability, for the conflict is carried on from beginning to end during the long hours of a single night! I am far from supposing that the duration of such struggles will in every instance be the same; still I cannot help thinking that when long-cherished and authoritatively prescribed dogmas are thus

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tried, found wanting, and discarded between sleeping and waking, the hold that they could have formerly possessed on the convictions must have been very slight, or else they could not have had a fair trial. The time I took to eliminate the multifarious accretions which ecclesiasticism had at various times and in divers manners introduced into my conception of Christianity I do not rightly know; I only know it took some years and no inconsiderable amount of reflection to arrive at the conclusion I have just mentioned.

What was then my terminus is, on the present occasion, my starting-point. In investigating the relation of Christianity to Free-thought I purpose to define it as 'the life and words of Christ,' *i.e.* those direct teachings which He set before His hearers with a distinct intimation of their complete sufficiency as rules of human conduct, *e.g.* the emphatic words found at the end of the Sermon on the Mount: 'Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them is like unto a man who built his house upon a rock.' And this leads me to observe that without very extensive acquaintance with the many questions that have arisen concerning the Gospels, the most elementary criticism would suffice to impress on us the necessity of remembering the circumstances under which they were composed. They were products of a time when the Church as an ecclesiastical system was beginning to consolidate its teachings and its policy, and therefore when a hierarchical or exclusive spirit began to manifest itself. Traces of that spirit on the part of the Apostles are found, as might have been anticipated, in the Gospels, and are diligently repressed by Jesus Christ (Matt. xx. 25–28; Luke ix. 46, 49, 55, 56). This fact cannot but render the few passages in which Christ Himself is made the medium of a harsh Judaic expression of intolerance—*e.g.* Matt. x. 5, xvi. 19; John iv. 22—or the consignment to the Apostles of any other than the moral and persuasive power He claimed for Himself, exceedingly suspicious, so much so that I have not the least doubt of their being interpolations, which found a ready and natural reception into the utterances of Christ when the sacerdotal powers of the Church began to be consolidated, *i.e.* about the end of the second century.

Having thus laid down what seems the true starting-point of our inquiry, and at the same time secured a definition of Christianity, I will briefly indicate the method I propose to follow.

Christianity, we all admit, is a doctrine, and whatever other functions Jesus Christ fulfils, He is first of all a teacher of men.

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Now to determine what Jesus taught, the obvious course to pursue is to go directly to Himself and ascertain as far as possible what His words were, their meanings for those who heard them, and through them for others. . . . I therefore take my stand at the precise moment of time when Christ begins His teaching in Galilee, with some such discourse, let us say, as the well-known Sermon on the Mount. I consider the teacher and the persons to be taught. Every teacher will insist especially on what he deems of most importance, and will, moreover, adapt his instruction to the circumstances and ideas of his hearers. Hence, in considering the question how far Jesus Christ's teaching was dogmatic, for that is the main point involved in our question of its relation to freedom of thought, I propose to ask—

I. What dogmas and convictions He found in His hearers.

II. How He dealt with those convictions by way of approval or disapproval.

As to the first point. I do not think we need investigate the peculiarities of creed, race, or physical environment which in many respects distinguished the people of Northern Palestine from those of the South. Recent writers of an imaginative turn of mind have dilated on this subject to an extravagant extent, so much so as to make Christianity a kind of inevitable product, a doctrinal concentration of the influences and feelings inspired by the high mountains, blue skies, clear atmosphere, and imposing scenery of Northern Palestine; or else, in the same alembic of imagination, they have tried to distil it from the mutual combination of its mixed races—Greek, Arabic, Syriac, Phœnician, and Jewish. The single fact may suffice for our purpose that the inhabitants of a district so far removed from the capital—the centre of rabbinic and theocratic tendencies—would probably be somewhat freer from dogmatic prejudices than their brethren of the South, though a small acquaintance with the Gospel narrative will suffice to assure us that this freedom was itself of a partial and limited nature.

Nor, again, need we push our inquiries very far into the prior history of the Jews, and the various fluctuations of their creed. That such fluctuations exist, and that Judaism is not, as was formerly thought, a supremely pure and simple faith, uncontaminated by foreign and Gentile elements, may now be regarded as one of the best-attested conclusions of modern Biblical criticism. We may content ourselves with the undisputed fact that about two centuries or so previous to the commencement of Christ's mission a gradual advance in rabbinical and Mosaic dogmatism had set in—an advance which seems sufficiently marked for our purpose

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by the rise and rapid growth in power and popularity of the Pharisees—the great dogmatic party among the Jews.

I. The chief compact body of Jewish belief and worship with which the new teaching of Christ had to reckon was of course Mosaism, *i.e.* the law of the great Jewish legislator regarded not so much as an ethical as a ceremonial and sacrificial code. On the supernatural origin and undoubted pre-eminence of this law all parties among the Jews were substantially united. The Pharisee and the Sadducee both agreed to accept it as the divine basis of their religious polity, and the former extended its influence further by making it the principle of the national polity as well. Now Mosaism in the time of Christ was not a dead or effete creed. In the popular estimation, and by means of the propagandist activity of the Scribes and Pharisees, it was not only living but growing. In no two centuries since its origin had its development been so great, its influence so extensive, as in those immediately preceding the birth of Christ. The great Teacher therefore came in contact with it in the full tide of its development, at the moment when national misfortunes and theocratic jealousy imparted a zest to its minutest prescriptions, and a warm glow to its most extravagant hopes and promises they had never hitherto possessed. The attitude of Christ to this great body of Mosaic belief and current religious practice is instructive. He is far from attempting to oppose the law of Moses, taking it as a whole. On the contrary, He appeals to its ethics as emanating from God and as containing the sum of human duty together with the complete conditions of salvability. He allows to Scribes and Pharisees a certain official authority in virtue of their sitting in Moses' seat. He announces that He is come not to destroy but to fulfil the law, meaning, however, as the context and other teachings clearly establish, not the fulfilment of strict observance, but that of spiritual completion and consequent abrogation. But while maintaining the ethical and religious continuity of His doctrine with that of Moses, which may possibly be one interpretation of the words, 'Before [even] Abraham was, I am,' He nevertheless proclaims distinctly the insufficiency of the law, and insists on the imperfect righteousness which the Pharisees hoped to achieve by its means. Nor is He less severe on some of its ethical precepts—'Love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy,' 'An eye for an eye,' and other maxims of a like kind, which He not only opposes in the interests of His own humane and refined teaching, but absolutely inverts. The ceremonial aspect of the law He also repudiates both by word and deed. The love of God He proclaims to be more than whole

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burnt-offerings and sacrifices. The worship of the Temple He subordinates to the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth. To the puerile distinctions between pure and impure meats, holy and unholy days, ceremonial cleanness and uncleanness, in a word, to all ritualistic and external observances, He is either supremely indifferent or else attempts to impart an ethical and religious significance. It would be difficult to set bounds to the derogation of mere ritual and formal rites implied in such precepts as 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath,' 'Not that which entereth, but that which proceedeth forth from the mouth defileth a man,' 'Leave thy gift before the altar and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift,' and His repeated injunctions of absolute secrecy and isolation in prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, are not less significant. Moreover, He openly ridicules the literal observance of prescriptions which were intended to bear a moral and spiritual meaning, *e.g.* the wearing phylacteries and text-bordered garments as an easy mode of obeying the command which enjoined attention to the written law. And whereas the Scribes fondly cherished the persuasion that their law was destined for all future time, Christ emphatically declared the temporary and incidental nature of its enactments, *e.g.* on the subject of divorce, and appeals from the law of Moses to the law of Nature—'From the beginning it was not so.'

We thus perceive that Christ dealt with Mosaism in the spirit of the religious reformer and—if I may venture to employ reverently a term which has suffered from unmerited suspicion—of the Free-thinker. So far from receiving *en bloc* the national creed and popular convictions of His time, surrounded though they were with high sanctions and venerable prescriptions, He proceeded deliberately to analyze, criticize, and in most cases to repudiate and reject. The national, local, particular aspects of Mosaism—in other words, its most distinctive features—He endeavoured to eliminate. There is no appeal to the Jew as Jew, no reference to the wonderful events in his history in virtue of which he claimed to be the particular favourite of heaven—no allusion at least of a complimentary kind to the ceremonies, usages, and beliefs which were nearest to the Jewish heart. Like His predecessor, John the Baptist, Christ regarded the boasted descent from Abraham as a matter of very trifling moment. It is to man as man, irrespective of race, religion, and nationality, that Christ appeals. The relation of man to God as a reasoning being to his Maker provides the basis of His religion, while the equally imperative fact of every

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man sharing with his fellows common feelings and duties supplies the foundation of His ethics. A greater departure from the genius of Mosaism it is impossible to conceive—a greater advance in freedom, contrasting it with Jewish dogma, it is difficult to imagine. In every case the legitimate outcome of dogmatic teaching and usage is exclusiveness. All privileged creeds and systems of belief partake of the nature of close fences and high walls of separation, marking off clearly and definitively the chosen race from all other people in the world. With unimportant exceptions this was the aim of all Jewish teaching prior to Christ. No doubt in some cases this theocratic exclusiveness was the natural form which zeal for monotheism assumed. But in general it was more than this, it was a kind of caste-feeling based on the double ground of national descent and religious privilege. The development it attained in Mosaism, and the fact that of all intolerant religions Judaism yields to none in savage bigotry and fanaticism, is easily explicable, for the whole of its teaching, political and religious, was centred on this object. Its enemies were *ipso facto* the enemies of Jahve, and hence were denied the most ordinary and indisputable rights of humanity. Of this feeling the pages of Old Testament history supply abundant proofs. Few records of national life are more stained by bloodshed and inhumanity, while some of the prescriptions in their law, *e.g.* parts of the Book of Deuteronomy, are not to be exceeded for heartless cruelty by the maxims even of the Spanish Inquisition. The measure of this heavy yoke of religious dogma and political intolerance suggests the magnitude of the deliverance from it which was effected by Christ. His contemporaries, from their point of view, were right in regarding Him as a neologian and an unbeliever—a despiser of the law and religion they ascribed to Moses, and it was with that conviction that they put Him to death. Our subject, relating as it does to some of the great *Bahnbrecher* (Path-makers), to use an expressive German word, of the world, will confront us again and again with attempts in religion and philosophy similar in aim and method to Christ's opposition to Mosaism, endeavours to supplant sacerdotal domination by liberty, and dogmatic intolerance by comprehensive charity. So far, and speaking from a human point of view, Christ stands on the same platform with Sokrates, Sakya-Muni, Descartes, Luther, Wicliff, Bacon, and Locke, as an opposer of a tyrannical and narrow creed, and a preacher of religious and intellectual freedom.

II. In connection with Mosaism we must notice the effect of Christ's teaching on the conceptions it inculcated as to the nature

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and providential dealings of God. Voltaire has ridiculed with well-deserved pleasantry the opinion that the stars, planets, satellites, &c. of remotest space were called into being for the especial and exclusive behoof of the denizens of our own little earth. In its ordinary form, I need not tell you, the notion is derived from Judaism. To the Jew God was, as has been observed,[1] 'a kind of upper rabbi of the heavens.' The end and aim of His existence was the material welfare of the chosen people. His creation, His government, His laws, were adapted for their sole advantage; the confusion and discomfiture of their enemies forming a necessary part of this Divine design. Not that the Jew regarded the Divine government as moral in any broad sense of the term, as that his nationality and religion were conceived by him in the light of ethical claims on God's bounty. To be a Jew was to be the possessor inherently of qualities not only equivalent to but far surpassing any combination of moral excellences in a Gentile. Cherishing this belief, it is hardly wonderful that he should have regarded all the operations of Nature as intended to promote his own welfare. The prosperity of the Gentile was a direct insult to the circumcised child of Abraham, and a reproach to the Jahve of the Jews; while national defeat or calamity was regarded as a forfeiture of pledges made by God to their fathers. Numerous are the appeals in the Old Testament writings to the exclusively Jewish sympathies by which Jahve was supposed to be animated, while attempts are perpetually made to arouse His anger and jealousy against their enemies, by adducing the satirical reflections these might make on the incapacity and worthlessness of the Jewish Deity—'Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?' I am far from supposing that some of the more thoughtful minds among the nation did not occasionally break through this unworthy prejudice, that the startling incongruity of a Ruler of the Universe whose administration was directed solely to the well-being of that infinitesimal portion of its inhabitants that dwelt between Dan and Beersheba, did not sometimes make itself felt. In a preceding chapter we saw that this belief had been called into question by some of the Psalmists, and that the suggestion had presented itself of a Divine government not exclusively dominated by Jewish, or, so far as temporal rewards and punishments, the only ones known by the Jews, were concerned, even by ethical considerations. 'For he seeth that wise men also die as well as the ignorant and foolish,' &c. Still, as a popular

[1] Gfrörer, *Jahrhundert des Heils*, i. p. 123.

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conviction—a dogma which lay at the root of all Jewish theology and patriotism, it had survived the attacks of embryo Skeptics, and the more potent suggestions of doubt that a long course of national calamities and sufferings could not but have inspired. At the time of Christ, and through the influence and teaching of Scribes and Pharisees, no belief was more fervently cherished than that which made the operations of Nature and the destinies of humanity dependent upon Palestinian and Jewish considerations. Against this dogma—this petty, unworthy conception of the Divine dealings—Jesus Christ set Himself with unmistakable distinctness. It was wrong as a law of Nature, wrong as a principle assumed to regulate the fates of nations. The stress the Jew placed on his nationality Jesus Christ laid upon moral and spiritual qualities, irrespective of birth or race. The Jewish emphasis on religious observances Christ tried to divert to human duties. So far from the operations of Nature being determined by ethical merit or demerit, they were clearly governed by general and impartial considerations. The idea of God which He promulgated was the universal Father, who caused His 'sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sent rain on the just and on the unjust.' That the laws of Nature, though subordinated to the creative will, are in their operation immutable, general, and impartial, is affirmed with as great force and distinctness as could have been expected from a doctrine so novel and so opposed to popular ideas. When the Jews asked of the man born blind, 'Who hath sinned, this man or his parents?' Christ's answer was, 'Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God might be manifested in him.' The Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices in some popular *émeute*—those on whom the Tower of Siloam fell—the victims, *i.e.* of human and political as well as of natural accidents, are equally declared not to have been sinners above all others for that they suffered such things. The immutability of Nature's processes is urged as illustrating an analogous congruity and necessary sequence in moral actions. 'By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?' The law of cause and effect, or the usual order discernible in natural phenomena, which was recognised by the Jews in respect of the weather, He bids them apply to the spiritual and moral order of the universe. So far from the Divine government being limited to the well-being of the Jews, there was no part of Nature where its operation might not be discerned. It was God who fed the birds of the air, who painted the lily in splendour rivalling the glory of Solomon, and

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it was solely by the operation of His laws that a sparrow fell to the ground.

The doctrine of Christ as to the persistency and immutability of the laws that govern the universe found expression also in His devotional language and the terms in which He described His mission. To the ordinary Jew the will of God was a personal anthropomorphic volition, having for its object the material prosperity of himself and his nation. All the wonderful events in the history of his race were assumed to be so many proofs and illustrations of this fact. The Jew would have had no scruple in trying to divert this stream of omnipotent energy to his own private purposes as often as he thought fit, were it not for his firm persuasion that God had already pledged Himself to exercise it on his sole behalf. As it was, he had no compunction in invoking supernatural interposition in all the great emergencies of his life. The genius of ordinary Jewish piety was, therefore, 'Let my will, or the will of my nation, the chosen people, be done.' With Christ, on the other hand, God's will, directed by wisdom and goodness, is supreme, immutable, and eternal. No thought was dearer to the Jew than the repeated and authoritative manifestations of Divine power which distinguished the national history, and which so clearly marked his people out as the prime favourites of Heaven; but on all these points Christ maintains a remarkable and significant silence. The law of God is not to be limited by distinctions of race, or the boundaries of a single territory. It must needs be done not in Palestine only, but on earth. Hence the highest aim of every man's religion is not to thwart, but in due reverence and fealty to submit himself to that will. Christ proclaimed His mission as not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him, and the simple form of devotion He commended to His disciples was but an elaborate, manifold rendering of the main petition of His life, 'Not my will, but Thine be done.' I am aware of the similarity of this acquiescent mood with the passive fatalistic character of Orientals in general. What the Western Aryan ascribes to the irreversible laws and processes of Nature, the Eastern assigns to Fate, a predetermined and irresistible destiny. But the conception of Christ is based on other foundations; it is the inherent supremacy of the Divine will, which limits without destroying the freedom of human action. Moreover, the idea, regarded as a principle of indolence and abject fatalism, is one which has mainly emerged in the Semitic character since the time of Christ, and is due in no small measure to the spread of Mohammedanism. The Jew of the Old Testament, as I have said,

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esteemed the supreme law or volitional energy of the universe, together with its manifold applications, as adapted for himself, and for that very reason was continually desirous of witnessing some of the supernatural occurrences which he regarded as its highest mode of manifestation. No event was so insignificant, no phenomenon of nature so trivial, that the Jew could not find in it traces of such personal or national application. When, therefore, Christ established the Divine will as a general law infinitely superior to individual or national interests, when He asserted it as automatic, omniscient, and supreme, He distinctly contravened the popular dogma; while He stigmatized the national eagerness of the Jews to witness miracles—the signs of Divine power—as the mark of unbelievers, an evil and adulterous generation.

Nor is Christ's teaching less explicit on the relation of the Divine government to the Jews considered as a Church and nation. This relation forms the subject-matter of some three-fourths of His parables; indeed, the fact that it is never put forth in a distinct form, but conveyed in the indirect, suggestive, half-ironical[1] manner which teachers of all ages employ for the inculcation of unwelcome truth, is a significant token of its divergency from current Jewish belief. Conceding from the ordinary standpoint a priority in respect of the religious teaching of the chosen people, Christ nevertheless maintains that such prior claim cannot be understood as impugning the justice or impartiality of God. To all nations and races He stands in an equally close, if not identical, relation, and judges them all from the same moral and spiritual standpoint. Hence the last labourers sent into the vineyard receive the same wages as those first employed; indeed, the last may turn out to be first and the first last. So, the younger son who has squandered his equal original moiety of the paternal inheritance in riotous living, is not only assigned filial rights, but his subsequent return is welcomed by the father and made an occasion of joy and festivity. Thus did Christ oppose Himself to current Jewish theology considered as an interpretation of nature and of Jewish history. In each case the teaching He inculcated was free, broad, and expansive. It was a veritable protest against Jewish dogmatism, exclusiveness, and fanaticism. Being thus anti-dogmatic, it was *ipso facto* anti-Jewish, and His narrow-minded countrymen were undoubtedly correct in regarding it as free-thinking, incredulous, unpatriotic, and destructive.

[1] This appears to be the character of the reason assigned by Christ for His persistent teaching by parables, 'that hearing they might hear and not understand, and seeing they might see and not perceive.'

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III. But there was one popular conviction of the Jews exceeding all the rest in the passionate intensity with which it was held—I mean, belief in the Messias and the approach of a Messianic kingdom. Though indistinctly foreshadowed in patriotic hymns and prophetic oracles prior to the Captivity, that event imparted a new and vivid significance to the national expectation. At the time of Christ it had become the leading conviction of the Jews.[1] Nor is it difficult to see why it should have thus come to attain such importance. It appealed at once to their patriotism and religion—the motive influences by which they had ever been most powerfully dominated. It was the event needed to fulfil the promises made to the fathers—the triumphant realization of centuries of pious expectation—the climax of the life both of the nation and the theocracy. Now, without examining in detail the various forms which this belief assumed at different epochs, and by various schools and parties at the same epoch, its general and popular characteristics in the time of Christ may be thus briefly summarized:[2]

1. The belief referred primarily to temporal and national blessings.

2. When it specifically included religious advantages, these were interpreted as the diffusion of Judaism among the countries of the world.

3. The Messias was to be a prince of a certain royal dynasty.

4. The Messianic conquest was to be effected by force of arms and material prowess, not by persuasion and moral influences.

5. The Messianic kingdom was to be earthly, including, according to some authorities, all the kingdoms of the world.[3]

6. The Messianic worship was to be mainly sacrificial and ceremonial.

Such was the faith—I might say the Messianic creed—which, though dreamy and unsubstantial in its origin, constituted the chief dogmatic teaching of the nation in the time of Christ. Although prospective in its scope, and possessing little adequate foundation in the past experiences of the nation, few creeds have ever wielded a more potent influence, or manifested a more exuberant vitality. Probably none ever equalled it in popularity,

[1] Cf. Keim, *Jesus of Nazara*, Eng. trans. i. 322.

[2] It will readily be understood that no attempt is here made to do more than to adduce the salient features of the doctrine considered in their bearing on the teaching of Christ. Comp. *Il Messia secondo Gli Ebrei di D. Castelli*, pp. 248–77, for a fuller treatment of the Messianic period.

[3] Castelli, *op. cit.* pp, 254, 275.

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in the largest sense of the term, or in the power of generating a sublime fanaticism, against which excessive tortures and a martyr's death were utterly powerless. In the time we are speaking of, the expectation of the Christ, the circumstances attending His coming, His royal descent, His personal characteristics, the ultimate success after terrible calamities of His half-warlike, half-prophetic mission, the discomfiture and disgrace of the national foes, the complete triumph and indefinite extension of the Messianic power—these were ordinary topics of conversation in most Jewish households from one end of the land to the other. A religious movement or reformation which refused to take account of this immense body of national faith and expectation must clearly have been stillborn. There is at least no doubt that this belief forms a powerful element in the teaching of Christ. Humanly speaking, it contributed to mould and direct it, though I have no wish to call it the only, or even the chief, initiatory motive of His mission. Moreover, it presented a soil in which every germ of Messianic teaching must needs have fructified to a greater or less extent. Hence we find Christ appealing from the beginning to the end of His mission to certain aspects of Messianic faith. On the first occasion of His teaching, *e.g.* in the synagogue of Nazareth, He called the attention of His audience to the moral and spiritual work of the Messias as it was described by the 2nd Isaias, and claimed those qualities for His own mission. The general theme of His earliest preaching was, 'Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' He adopted the designations by which the Messias should be known; but, it is significant, only the most general and humanitarian of them—I mean 'the Son of Man.' The titles of the kingdom of Heaven, the kingdom of God, which He applied to the community He purposed to found, were also recognized names of the Messianic kingdom. And on one particular occasion, He distinctly termed the acknowledgment of His Messianic claims on the part of Peter as a revelation from God. There is so far no doubt of Jesus Christ claiming to be regarded as the Messias, and His social and religious polity to be defined as 'the kingdom of God.' What is noteworthy is that the claim is nowhere made openly or in express terms. On the contrary, the Apostles present at the confession of Peter are strictly charged to tell no man that He was the Christ. However, when accused of having set up a claim to be King of the Jews, He repudiated the accusation in the remarkable words, 'My kingdom is not of this world,' &c. The reason of this apparent inconsistency is the point on which I lay stress. His reluctance to assume the Messianic

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character, as conceived by the popular expectation of the Jews, proceeds from the feeling that the conception He had formed of it differed materially from that which His countrymen generally cherished. In other words, instead of opposing the dogma, He attempts to modify it. Preserving the names, titles, and definitions so long connected with the Messianic faith, He assigns them new significations. He endeavours to direct the ancient hopes into fresh channels, and to suggest new realizations. He tries to divest ancient Judaism of all its most dogmatic, exclusive, and intolerant features, and to give it a freedom, expansiveness, and spirituality of meaning which was just as much a virtual abrogation of the old belief as His interpretation of Mosaism was a tacit abrogation of the old law. Thus, preserving the title of 'kingdom of Heaven' as the name of the society He came to form, He declares that the object of His kingdom was not territorial conquest and national aggrandizement, but peace, virtue, and truth. The methods of its propagation were not force and compulsion, but reason and persuasion. The scope of its operation was not Palestinian and Judaic, but cosmopolitan and universal. Its principle of authority was not a written law, but the human conscience. Its worship was not ceremonial and sacrificial, but moral and spiritual. Its requirements, claims to admission, &c. were all ethical. There was thus hardly one single phase of current Messianic hopes which did not suffer a complete change, if not inversion, from Jesus Christ's teaching. And the changes, be it observed, are all in the same direction; the aim is clearly enfranchisement and spiritual freedom. The object is to construe a belief in its most inclusive not exclusive, acceptation—to formulate a creed in its widest and most comprehensive terms—to denationalize a purely local faith by making it as universal as the limits of the world and of humanity.

Moreover, Christ's purely spiritual conception of the Messianic kingdom and its ruler is further shown by the slight value He placed on some of the material qualifications His countrymen thought inseparable from it. No point in the personal history of Messias was deemed of more importance than His actual descent from the family of David. But not only was Christ insensible to any claims He might have had on this score, but He distinctly subordinates the physical ties of family to spiritual kinship. Indeed, in His argument with the Pharisees, He seems to throw a doubt on the necessity of the Messias' descent from David. His genealogy, on which two of the Evangelists lay such stress, is nowhere alluded to by Himself. His birth at Bethlehem, 'David's

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royal city,' unknown as it was to His immediate followers,[1] is so far from being noticed by Himself that He continually speaks of the district round the Sea of Galilee as His own country; while instead of claiming homage and honour on account of His Messianic office, He says, 'He came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.' So far was He also from cherishing the national pride becoming the 'Hope of Israel,' that He included Gentiles as equal sharers of God's promises, placing them even above Jews in point of spiritual merit. Indeed, His frequent commendations of aliens and heretics, as, *e.g.* the Samaritans, and His sitting down to meat with publicans and sinners —outcasts from the nation and the theocracy—gave continual umbrage to the Scribes and Pharisees.

It would be unreasonable to expect that Christ's neologianism as to the central belief of His nation would not be recognised and bitterly resented. Even His immediate followers failed utterly to perceive the scope, spirituality, and grandeur of the new faith. There is, indeed, a profound disparity between the conceptions of Christ and His Apostles as to the attributes of the Messianic kingdom. While the teacher contemplated a spiritual sovereignty —a kingdom in the hearts of men—His sensuously-minded followers were debating questions of precedence in a visible and terrestrial dominion. While the accessories of Christ's reign were heavenly and spiritual, the Apostles contemplated the splendour and magnificence of an Oriental Court. While they strained their gaze watching for the premonitory signs of its advent, Christ repressed their curiosity, asserting that it came not by observation, and proclaiming its actual existence within them. Similarly, the lessons taught by the parables of the kingdom are religious and moral truths already in existence, and have rarely an exclusively prospective signification. I do not mean to say that Christ never expressed Himself in the eschatological language which occupies so prominent a part of the utterances assigned Him in the Gospels; but, to my mind, every principle of consistency, both of character and teaching, would tend to make the meaning He Himself would have attributed to every such genuine apocalypse spiritual and ethical rather than material and Jewishly Messianic. And if His own disciples failed to recognise in their Master's teachings the views generally held by their nation; if the kingdom of Heaven of which He spake seemed to them to lack the gorgeous colouring with which national hopes and enthusiasm had invested it, we could hardly expect more insight or a greater degree of enlighten-

[1] Cf. John vii. 41, 42.

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ment from casual hearers. Nor can we feel surprised at the doubt which expressed itself in the question, 'Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another?' The Scribes and Pharisees were fully cognizant of the discrepancy between the popular Messianic creed and the spiritual teaching of Christ. An ideal Messias after the national mind must needs have sided with the great theocratic and national party, whereas the teaching of Christ ran directly counter to all its religious and political preconceptions, as I shall soon have to notice. Still there was enough material in the overt utterances and parables of Christ, in perpetual allusions to the 'kingdom of Heaven,' to enable them to base such an accusation as would be likely to awaken the jealousy of the Roman power, and so to procure His death. This they accordingly accomplished. Christ suffered ostensibly as 'King of the Jews;' in reality, however, He was as much the victim of sacerdotal fanaticism and dogmatic prejudice as Sokrates, Bruno, Servetus, or any other martyr to Free-thought.

IV. The relation of Christ to the dogmatic teaching of His time is further exhibited in His behaviour to the two great Jewish sects. Indeed, for the purposes of our inquiry, the main tenets, principles, and tendencies of these rival parties are admirably adapted to represent the real character of Christ's teaching; for while the one is dogmatic, sectarian, and rigidly exclusive, the other is negative, indifferent, and Skeptical. It is clear, therefore, that when we find Christ in distinct antagonism to the former rather than the latter; when He impugns in the strongest terms their ideas of religion and morality; when He departs somewhat from His mild and gentle demeanour in addressing them; when, moreover, the avowed reasons for the severity of His language are the natural but immoral fruits of their dogmatic tendencies, we may accept it as a fair presumption that the spirit of Pharisaism, *i.e.* of sectarianism, bigotry, and exclusiveness, is that to which Christ was most opposed, and against which His teaching is chiefly directed. Nor is Christ's behaviour to this party less significant when we bear in mind the enormous ascendency, in religion and in politics, it had acquired at the Christian era, and which in some respects is not unlike the sway of the Puritans during the Commonwealth. Such a supremacy is explicable on grounds partly general, partly Jewish. Among most races and in most religious communities excessive austerity and scrupulosity are accepted as decisive proofs of real spiritual superiority, unaffected sincerity, and moral purity, which may or may not coexist with them. The pretensions of the Pharisees in this

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respect are set forth clearly in the New Testament, and are well canvassed by Christ. Moreover, their most characteristic doctrines were only developments of principles peculiarly belonging to Judaism, and hence were naturally grateful to the national and religious predilections of the chosen people. In opposing Himself, therefore, to Pharisaism, Jesus Christ may be said to have placed Himself in conflict with Judaism itself; with the national creed as it was then popularly understood, and with the general fabric—the prepossessions and interests—of the whole Jewish polity.

To the Pharisee and Scribe the main object of belief and life was the fulfilment of the law;[1] but not in its moral and spiritual, so much as in its dogmatic and ceremonial, aspect. Nor in the time of Christ was it simply the precepts of the Pentateuch, to which the Pharisee confessed his allegiance, so much as the large body of traditional accretion which had gradually grown round it. The Pharisees, like some religionists among ourselves, were persuaded of the truth of the 'doctrine of development;' but, as in the Romish Church, the newer outgrowths of their creed threatened to supersede and annihilate the earlier stages of which they were said to be natural developments.[2] These 'traditions of the elders' consisted of multifarious extensions and wire-drawn refinements of the ceremonial law,[3] and constituted an enormous addition to the dogmatic superstructure of simple Mosaism. As Wellhausen remarks,[4] 'the 613 commands of the written, and the thousand others of the unwritten, law left no room for the conscience.' Pharisaism in short manifested the inevitable tendency of all sacerdotalism, excessive ritual and dogma, to relegate ethical and human duties to a subordinate and inferior position. Now it was just this mischievous and immoral result of their teaching, veiled as it was under the specious pretext of religion, that roused the righteous indignation of Christ; for not only was it that natural and human obligations were postponed to the requirements of religious rites, but the postponement was deliberately made and authenticated by technical terms and authoritative formulæ. The word 'Korban,' *e.g.* which was assumed to free the unfilial child from the discharge of ordinary duties to his parents, is one of a whole class of terms employed by rabbinical authorities in the same sense, and which bear a striking similarity to the technicalities of Jesuit casuistry. And as new terms were devised to sanction clear infringements of

[1] Wellhausen, *Pharisäer und Sadducäer*, p. 21.
[2] Keim, *Jesus of Nazara*, Eng. trans. i. p. 335.
[3] Keim, *ibid.* pp. 340, 341.
[4] *Op. cit.* p. 19.

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the moral law, so were old ones perverted to a similar unworthy purpose. The word 'righteousness,' *e.g.* among whose meanings as employed by the Hebrew prophets ethical excellence was always preponderant, was now referred to actions having a strictly religious bearing; thus 'making,' to use the words of Christ, 'the commandments of God of none effect by their tradition.'

Another chief principle of Pharisaic belief was stress upon authority—*i.e.* mere human extrinsic authority—the traditions of the elders, or the dicta of particular rabbis. We have seen what small respect Christ manifested for the revered authority of Moses when his precepts came into conflict with prescriptions and sanctities of a higher nature. He was hardly likely to show more deference to the leaders of rabbinical schools and parties; indeed, He does not scruple to turn both themselves and their pretensions into ridicule. No doubt one result of this perpetual appeal to party names and maxims on the part of the Pharisees was the production of a wonderfully disciplined *esprit de corps*, which manifested itself in times of national danger by deeds of the sublimest heroism. But the religious fanaticism which is meritorious in the battle-field is apt to prove an undesirable quality in times of peace; for those who are ready to fight to the death against foes whom they regard as enemies of God will be just as ready to denounce as hostile to God every imperfect acquiescence in their own fanaticism at other times. The leaders of the Pharisees were fully aware of the secret of success of all factions and parties, whether political or religious, *i.e.* suppressing the individual, his intellect, his conscience—in a word, his humanity, and rendering him the passive and servile agent of those who claim to prescribe his belief and direct his actions. The vehement efforts of the Pharisees to add to the strength of their party by making proselytes are noticed by Christ in terms of severe reprehension, which those who compass sea and land for a similar purpose in our own day would do well to call to mind. And as their zeal to extend the bounds of their sect thus assumed a harsh and intolerant aspect, so did their efforts to preserve what they were pleased to regard the orthodox purity of their faith. 'No characteristic of the Pharisees,' says Wellhausen, 'is more prominent in the New Testament than their inquisitorial conduct, their perpetual attempts to dominate and control, the effect of which was the more repellent because it was justified by no official authority, and was not extorted by prophetic enthusiasm.'[1] Christ and His disciples were frequently the victims of this zealotry and espionage; indeed, the normal

[1] Wellhausen, *op. cit.* p. 20.

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attitude of the party to Himself is sufficiently indicated by the oft-recurring expression, 'They watched Him.' With a keenness and persistency only acquired in the school of religious intolerance, they canvassed every act and word of the great Teacher whose pure doctrine and practice formed such a complete contrast to theirs. 'This man,' said they, 'is not of God because He keepeth not the Sabbath-day'—a principle which, making ceremonial observance the sole test of religious worth, may be regarded as a distinctive feature of religious dogma everywhere. His sitting down to meat with publicans and sinners was a misdemeanour of the highest kind, protesting, as it did, against both their theocratic and national exclusiveness. They were careful to note other departures, whether from the law of Moses or from the tradition of the Elders. So they expostulated with Christ on His neglect to wash before eating, on His refusal to fast, His non-observance of the Sabbath, His neglect in the matter of meats and drinks, and His general indifference to formal rites and ceremonies of the same kind. In a word, they treated Christ as the Inquisition would have treated Him, or any disciple of His who was careful to imitate His life and words. They first persecuted and watched Him, and then they put Him to death.

With the Sadducees Jesus Christ, as a popular teacher, does not come so immediately into contact as He does with the Pharisees. While the latter were popular and influential, the former were a small and unpopular section of the Jews, though making up in wealth and culture for their lack of numbers. I have termed the Sadducees rationalistic and semi-Skeptical; such, at least, seems their general character. To the Pharisees they stood somewhat in the relation of Protestants and Free-thinkers. They opposed themselves to the traditions and amplifications which the Scribes added to the old law, just as the Reformers opposed the additions which Romanism had made to an earlier and purer Christianity. They refused to allow a development-theory of religious faith, and rejected all the dogmas which the Pharisees for some centuries had been superadding to the ancient creed. Thus they declared their disbelief in a future life, in a resurrection and final judgment, in angels, spirits—in a word, in an immaterial existence. For this reason they have been likened to the Epikoureans, and no doubt they possess several characteristics in common with that sect, especially as to their mode of life, and their indifference to all interests except such as were personal and terrestrial. If, however, in comparison with the Pharisees the range of their belief was narrow, their stress on the dogma that remained was proportionably greater; for just as the

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Protestants of the Reformation compensated for their rejection of Catholic dogma by a more stringent attention to the written Word, thus exchanging their ecclesiolatry for bibliolatry, so, as a consequence of greater stress on the written law, the Sadducees were less inclined than the Pharisees to relax the severity of its prescriptions. Hence they refused to sanction any modification of the old law of retaliation, 'An eye for an eye,' &c.

There is no doubt that Christ in His teaching contravenes indirectly the tenets and opinions of the Sadducees, though it is observable that He hardly ever mentions them by name, and never speaks of them in the bitterly hostile tone He employs of the Pharisees. Thus, in opposing the law of Moses, in advocating a human interpretation of its precepts, in preferring the spirit to the letter of Mosaism, in declaring the temporary and accidental nature of certain portions of the law, Christ clearly stood in a directly polemical relation to the Sadducees; while in His argument with them on the subject of the resurrection He reproaches them with ignorance of the meaning of their own law and a Skeptical forgetfulness of the power of God. Still, as I have remarked, His relation to them was of a less hostile kind than was His attitude to the Pharisees. What He would probably have found most worthy of reprehension had His connection with them been more intimate, would have been their selfish, cynical indifference to the real welfare of the people,[1] and their want of spirituality and devotion; in a word, the unsympathetic coldness and listlessness of their feelings, and their consequent negligence of obvious affections and duties both towards God and man.

What, then, it is time to ask, were the ultimate principles to which Christ appealed? We have seen that the authority His countrymen based on the written law of Moses was not only ignored but disputed by Him. Not only was it *said* by them of old time but it was *written*, so that the newer commandment quite superseded the old. Besides, the written law being thus partially abrogated, the personal authority of its interpreters, the Scribes and Pharisees, was necessarily jeopardized. Nor was the newer tradition of the elders treated with more deference. In short, the whole fabric of Jewish dogma was completely shattered by the purer and more spiritual teaching of Christ. Now the newer principles, viz. those to which Christ appealed in opposition to Judaism, seem to have been, in the order of their importance, the following:

1. Personal conviction, or the human conscience.
2. Experience, when the laws of nature are in question.

[1] Wellhausen, p. 73, and Comp. on the Sadducees, vol. i. p. 405.

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3. Himself, not as superior to, but as the embodiment of, truth.

1. Nothing is more noteworthy in the teaching of Christ than the noble fearlessness with which He appealed to the feelings and instincts of His hearers. The main object of Judaism, exaggerated by its later development of Pharisaism, had been to establish a spiritual despotism in which the consciousness—mental and emotional—of each individual was merged in the general interests and policy of the theocracy. Christ, on the contrary, appealed to the Jew as a constitutive portion of humanity, as possessing intellect, feelings, and judgment of his own, as endowed with the power and privilege of employing them on his own behalf, and as owing no responsibility for such employment save only to God and his own conscience. Hence there are few of Christ's teachings which are not adapted for men of all creeds and all races, few so saturated by local and Jewish colouring that they might not have emanated from any comprehensive teacher of humanity. In the place of creed and dogma Christ proclaimed the sanctity of the individual conscience. Instead of outward ceremonies—badges of conformity to an externally imposed faith—He required purity of heart, holiness and self-denial in life. Instead of a local deity, conceived under local and national forms, Christ appealed to the deity within; for with Him God was spirit, and required to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Christ therefore sets the moral conscience against Jewish dogma and formalism[1]—the individual against the theocratic community; and so doing proclaims His teaching as a gospel of liberty, and indicates the inalienable independence and supremacy of the human conscience. Nor, in truth, was any other course possible; there was no other authority to which, from His own point of view, He could appeal. Even allowing that His mission may have been authenticated to the sensuous minds of His hearers by His wonderful cures, it is clear that this attestation was disapproved by Himself, partly, perhaps, for the reason that similar thaumaturgic deeds were performed by other Jews, but chiefly, no doubt, from the fact that no miracle *can* be a satisfactory test of religious and moral truth. Here the conscience, the moral instincts of man, must stand alone. What, *e.g.* but the instinctive perception of the true scope of moral injunctions could decide between the letter of the old command—'Ye have heard it said by them of old time'—and the spirit of the newer precept—'I say unto you'? What but the instinctive sense of veracity could have determined in the clash of rival teachings between Himself and the Scribes that the inherent

[1] Cf. Volkmar, *Die Religion Jesu*, p. 71.

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truth of His words was superior to the borrowed authority of His adversaries? On what, again, could the injunction to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees have rested if not on the natural conviction of His hearers that hypocrisy and disingenuousness could only render unworthy service to the God of truth? But I need not adduce further examples of a truth so generally allowed. Every man who has examined for himself the ultimate basis on which Christ places His religion must see that it rests on the free and undogmatic foundation of the individual conscience.[1] This is further confirmed by the appeals He makes to His hearers to exercise their own understanding and judgment on the truths He lays before them. The oft-recurring 'He that hath ears to hear let him hear' is only another mode of appealing to the individual understanding of each of His auditors. 'If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness,' &c. is a clear assertion of such a 'verifying faculty,' and the possibility of perverting its decisions. So He asks His followers, 'Are ye also yet without understanding?' while of the multitude who exercised foresight as to the weather, but were unable to extend it to other subjects, He demands, 'Why do ye not of your own selves judge what is right?'

Thus, in His appeal to the personal consciousness as the final test of truth, Christ, humanly speaking, stands on the same footing as Sokrates, Descartes, and many other reformers, both in religion and philosophy. The commencement of human freedom, considered as a protest against the intellectual or religious slavery of dogma, consists in individualism. Liberty begins by a declaration of independence for every thinking, reasonable being. I am of course far from saying that there is not a point where the individual, for his own best interests, becomes merged in the community; and I maintain that Skeptics have sometimes carried their independence to an extravagant and libertine excess. Still, in the general interests of humanity, the mischiefs accruing from the abuse of freedom seem to me less than those which have obtained from its excessive limitation. Nor is Christ's position as a preacher of human freedom affected by the fact that He touches the question exclusively on its religious side; for it was just on this side that the tyranny of Judaism was most oppressive. Besides which, the innate freedom of the human conscience, once it is fully declared in the region of religious faith, will have no difficulty in avowing itself in other directions, where there is a danger of mental slavery. It is this truth which seems asserted by the remarkable words of

[1] Comp. on this subject A. Coquerel, *Le Christianisme Expérimental*, p. 265 and *passim*.

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St. Paul, 'He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet himself is judged of no man.' Indeed, it is in religion that excessive dogma is at once most easily engendered, most hard to be dislodged, and consequently where its influence when evil is most likely to be especially pernicious. Certainly no man who has achieved, to a greater or less extent, freedom from this form of dogma, will ever be likely to submit in servile and blind acquiescence to the authoritative dicta of another mode of thought, or the mere *ipse dixit* of any philosopher. In freeing, therefore, the religious conscience, Christ virtually proclaimed the freedom of the intellect as well. In this sense Christianity may be said to have been a propædeutic for modern thought, and its founder standing relatively to us between the old world of Judaism and the modern world of science and Free-thought—initiated, in reality, the process which has been termed 'Japhetizing the Semitic.' It would take us much too long to consider any of the various interesting directions of thought of which I have here indicated the starting-point, *e.g.* the extent to which the spirit of Christianity, operating even in the chains of sacerdotalism and ecclesiastical tyranny, has indirectly aided in various ways the sacred cause of human freedom. . . . I will therefore proceed to notice the second principle to which Christ appealed, I mean the operations of nature. I have, however, already dwelt on Christ's affirmation of the continuity of natural laws as antagonistic to Jewish belief. Here, therefore, I need only insist, as a general fact, on the beneficial effect of nature-studies in counteracting extreme speculative dogma. How this has been verified in modern history is a truth needing neither statement nor proof. When, therefore, it is urged, as it is sometimes, that an inherent and irreconcilable antagonism exists between Christianity and the most assured results of scientific research, it is important to remember that the discrepancy does not exist between modern science and the teachings of Christ. It is true, science and natural philosophy, as we understand them, were subjects lying far outside the horizon of the general Semitic intellect. If, therefore, we possess in the words of Christ, as I maintain we do, direct appeals, few in number but explicit in meaning, to natural phenomena, this is as much as we have any reasonable right to expect; enough, and more than enough, to warrant the opinion that Christianity as taught by Him does not place a barrier to scientific research. For my own part, I would go a step further. Even if Christ had never appealed to nature at all, if He had not once drawn men's attention to the unchangeable attributes of nature's laws, if He had never suggested analogies between natural and spiritual processes, if He

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had never pointed out the equable and impartial character of God's dealings; yet, if He had only insisted, as He did insist, on the primary importance of truth; if truth was for Him the basis of freedom and sanctification; if it was the object of His mission and the witness of His death, that single fact hallows and consecrates all search after it, no matter in what department of knowledge. For that reason alone we may say with Augustine and some others of the Fathers, 'Whatever is true is Christian,' as well as, 'Whatever is Christian is true,' or, employing Erigena's method of putting it, 'True philosophy is true religion, and, conversely, true religion is true philosophy.'[1]

3. That Christ claimed for Himself distinct authority as a teacher of truth is an undoubted fact, but it is important to observe that the grounds of His claim were derivative and extrinsic rather than personal and inherent. He makes no attempt, *e.g.* as a defender of Christianity would make in our own day, to infer the truth of His words from the wondrous events of His life. He does not even adopt the 'evidential' mode of proving His religion. He displays a marked carelessness in meeting ordinary objections to the truth of His teaching, as if its essentials were too direct, immediate, and intuitive to need elaborate ratiocination. The bases on which He founds His appeal are—1st, its own truth; 2nd, its harmony with the will of His Father. Now when a teacher appeals to truth as the justification and sanction of his doctrines, it is clear that he intends these doctrines to be received only so far as they are compatible with truth. That this was Christ's own view, and that He regarded His claim to belief as based upon His hearers' perception of His veracity, is fully shown by the passage, 'Which of you convicteth Me of error? and if I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?' where the implication clearly is that the faith of the hearer is commensurate only with the credibility of the speaker. So far is He also from arrogating for Himself, or for His words, an immunity from criticism, so far from attempting to coerce His hearers' minds with arbitrary dicta, possessing no other principle of authority but the fact of being His own utterances, that He is careful to disclaim this personal ascendency. 'If I bear witness of Myself,' He says, with an emphasis which shows He had never consciously done so, 'My witness is not true.' Again, 'If I honour Myself, My honour is nothing; it is My Father that honoureth Me.' 'He that is of the truth,' He said before Pilate, 'heareth My voice.'

If the objection be made that Christ assumes necessarily the position of a dogmatic teacher in professing to deliver the words of

[1] Scotus, *De Prædest.* chap. i.

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God, I reply, such is no doubt the case. He reveals the will of His Father, the only source of truth; and whatever assumption of dogmatic authority belongs to such a high position pertains unquestionably to Christ. Nevertheless, we must remember: 1. That every teacher, no matter on what subject, assumes *ex officio* a position of superiority over his hearers. The bare fact that he has truth to communicate posits a deficiency in them and the power of satisfying it in him. It would be absurd to suppose that Christ, any more than any other teacher, had the least doubt of the truth He came to deliver; so that the most that can be said of His dogmatic position is that it differs from that of ordinary teachers in the pre-eminently high sanction on which it is based. But: 2. Even this necessarily dogmatic attitude is deprived of imperious or tyrannical insistency by Christ's own appeal to the conscience of His hearers. Spiritual like intellectual truth presupposes, not a passive receptivity, which is only an intellectual paralysis unable to discern between truth and error, but a power of discrimination, a verifying faculty, which gives to truth whatever sanctity it can possess, without which, indeed, no truth as such could be communicable any more than light could be manifested to a blind man. When, therefore, Christ appeals to the consciousness of His hearers for an attestation of His truth, as, *e.g.* 'If I do not the works of the Father, believe Me not; but if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works,' &c., the verification demanded clearly implies the power of testing the divine nature of the Revelation He communicated to men. Hence even in asserting His doctrine as the truth of God there really is no dogmatism, in the common sense of the word; the final decision is left to the supreme arbitrament of the human conscience.

A further proof of the undogmatic character of Christ's teaching is found in the fact that He left behind Him no writing of any kind, no authoritative formula which might be accepted as a basis of speculative belief; and this omission is the more remarkable because it is not supplied, so far as the evangelists state, by His oral teaching. We have nothing, *e.g.* which stands in the same relation to Christian faith as the Lord's Prayer does to Christian devotion, or the two great commandments to Christian practice. Now, on the hypothesis that besides the faith He asked for Himself, *i.e.* in those truths of His teaching which approved themselves to the consciences of His hearers, He also insisted, or intended to insist, on a declaration of belief in a series of difficult metaphysical propositions, such an omission is quite unaccountable. Nor is it easier to understand why, assuming the society Christ endeavoured to

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establish to have been designed by Him after the model of an earthly sovereignty, administered by an hierarchy, held together by an elaborate system of dogma and ritual, He left no verbal or written code of regulations for its constitution and government. Whereas, on the theory I hold to be true, that Christ's prospective community—His Messianic kingdom—was intended to be purely spiritual, independent of local boundaries and political powers, and yet by the simplicity of its creed and worship capable of assuming any organization that might be best adapted to the habits and instincts of its adherents, and that left room for the exercise of the piety and humanitarianism which formed its elementary principles—these omissions on the part of its founder, this plasticity in the original constitution of the Christian Church, is readily understood.

Nor is the stress laid by Christ on ethical conduct unimportant as indicating His opinion of dogma. The history of individuals and of ecclesiastical communities supplies us with ample proof, not only of the deterioration of moral character, the religious selfishness, the lack of comprehensiveness and human sympathy, produced by excessive dogma, but also of the diminished regard for practical human duty which is its inevitable accompaniment. In the history of Christianity, *e.g.* the periods when articles of faith have been most exacting, when the attention of the Church has been especially concentrated on theological speculation, doctrinal systematizing, and dogmatic insistency, have been precisely the periods when human virtues and duties, charity, kindliness, and sympathy, have been most defective. Hence, if it is true that too great emphasis on the performance of ethical duties tends to secularize the conscience, it is equally true, and the results are infinitely more mischievous, that too great stress on assumed divine obligations in the matter of creed and ritual—an exuberant other-worldliness, in short—renders it narrow, inhuman, and intolerably selfish. The Pharisaism against which Christ contended was suffering from this very defect. Religionism and assumed service to God had completely ousted morality and duty to man. Christ protested vigorously against this inversion of the true relations of human and divine obligations, disguised as it was under the specious plea of religious zeal. He distinctly declared that human obligation was not only equal to, in practice it was higher than, religious, *i.e.* ritual, service. The aim of all Christian effort He asserted to consist, not in theory and speculation, but in action. He was the genuine Christian, who, above all things, did the will of His Father. All His precepts were in a word concerned, not with creeds and formularies, but with unselfish deeds and holy lives.

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Nor is it of less importance to note that though Christ's utterances comprise many and bitter reproaches of the hypocrisy, immorality, &c., of the Pharisees, there is no word which reprehends exclusively any irregularity in their speculative belief as such. Nor do we find that, although Christ is exhibited in relation to all the diversities of faith or non-faith then existing in Palestine—the irreligiousness of the Roman, the idolatry of the Syro-Phœnician, the dissent of the Samaritan, the unbelief of the Sadducee, as well as the rigid orthodoxy of which Pharisaism claimed the exclusive monopoly—He considered those differences in themselves as morally culpable, or displayed the least wish to resent them. His argument with the Sadducees as to their disbelief in the resurrection might at first sight seem an exception to this rule, but it is observable that their dilemma was suggested by themselves, and that the utmost that Christ says in reply is that they ignored their scripture, and the Divine Omnipotence. As an illustration of the difference in treatment of the same shortcoming, contrast Christ's mild expostulation with the Sadducees for their absolute denial of the resurrection, and the attitude of St. Paul to Hymenæus, who did not deny the resurrection, but said that it was passed. The apostle did not hesitate to anathematize and excommunicate, to deliver him over to Satan, that he might learn not to blaspheme.[1] Moreover, the Messianic judgment of Christ, perhaps the eschatological passage of all those attributed to Him which bears the closest affinity to the spirit of His teaching, is based not upon speculative but upon practical merits and demerits. Not because they have refused belief in this or the other religious tenet, but because they have neglected the Christian rule of charity, is retribution awarded to the unrighteous.

What, then, we are now in a position to ask, is the relation of Christianity in its first pure form—the teaching of Christ Himself—to Free-thought and impatience of dogma? Clearly, so far from prohibiting, it distinctly sanctions both one and the other. To the dogmatism of Scribes and Pharisees it opposes the freedom of the gospel. Against the heavy yoke of traditionalism and ceremonial religion it places the light yoke of the Saviour. To external authority it prefers the human conscience. To ritualism it opposes

[1] On the other hand, Dr. Donaldson quotes, as an instance of the extraordinary liberty enjoyed by the early Church, the way in which St. Paul dealt with those in the Corinthian Church who denied the resurrection. He does not once threaten expulsion.—*Apostolical Fathers*, Introd. p. 65, *note* 9. But St. Paul's tolerance of theological adversaries is not always to be relied on. Comp. *e.g.* Gal. v. 12.

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simplicity and spirituality of worship. Instead of a theocracy it attempts to found a Divine democracy. Against acts exclusively done for God it arrays services to be rendered to men. In short, there is hardly a single department of faith or practice on which Christ's teaching does not place the distinct and ineffaceable mark of freedom. With the ill-connotations which have in my opinion causelessly surrounded the term Skeptic, it would no doubt sound impious to confer that or any similar designation on Jesus Christ. Still this need not make us forget that had we lived in Palestine when He taught, and especially if we had been brought up in the prevailing traditions of Scribes and Pharisees, this is precisely the aspect His teaching would have borne to us. We should have felt that whatever the intrinsic merits of His doctrine, however excellent and sublime His ethical teaching, however pure, gentle, and humane His life, yet as regards the convictions then held by the Jews, His utterances had a distinctly solvent and subversive character. This was the very charge brought against Him, as it was against His apostles, as against Sokrates, as against Freethinkers in every age, and without any exception. One result of our researches has been to show us the nature of the ideal community or Church founded by Christ. It consisted, as we have seen, rather of a certain spirit than any definite form. As St. Peter well described it, 'In every nation he that feareth God and doeth righteousness is accepted of Him.' The question remains, How far was this simple broad foundation of Christianity intended by its founder to be definitive? That question I, for my part, would deliberately answer in the affirmative. The opinion of most Christian Churches, that Christ's teaching was intentionally rudimentary and imperfect, that He came merely to lay the foundation of a formal hierarchical, dogma-making community, for whose evolution in doctrine and worship He gave *carte blanche*, I regard as not only unsubstantiated by any show of proof, but as mischievous in itself, and derogatory to the Great Teacher. Under no circumstances could it be admitted that the position, *e.g.* of the observer of the sayings of Christ, whom He compared to a man who had built his house upon the rock, was one which needed rectifying. Nor could it be acknowledged that the life of the earnest doer of the two great commandments, of which Christ affirmed 'This do and thou shalt live,' was an imperfect life, needing stimulation and modification by a corrupt and ambitious ecclesiasticism. To me it has always been an interesting speculation how far Christ, from His ideal standpoint, foresaw, humanly speaking, the subsequent development of the Church. What, *e.g.*

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were His reflections in the hours preceding His death as to the future constitution of the society He had endeavoured to form—the Divine Messianic kingdom of love, truth, righteousness, and peace? The net result He had achieved, which He was about to confirm by His death, was the distinct assertion of new principles of religious freedom and moral duty, of love, truth, and holiness before God and man. With these He had endeavoured to imbue His disciples. Their extension through Judaism into the Gentile world, without much regard to system, organization, or external form, was probably the main end and purpose of His mission.[1] Can we therefore conceive, according to the common theory, that He contemplated in the long vista of coming centuries the necessity of the transmutation of His few principles of Christian thought and life into an elaborate organization, based on the model, and administered by the method, of the kingdoms of this world? Did He foresee that His practical precepts were destined to be supplanted by speculative dogmas binding the thoughts and consciences of men in chains harder and more unyielding than adamant? Did He conceive that the two great commandments would become transformed and amplified into confessions, creeds, and dogmatic systems of portentous length and proportionate difficulty? Did He, further, foresee that these pretended developments of His own simple precepts would be employed to subserve human greed, ambition, and lust? that His gospel of liberty would be degraded into an instrument of tyranny and oppression? that His easy yoke and light burden would be changed into heavy sacerdotal impositions, precisely like those Pharisaic burdens which He reprobated as grievous to be borne? Did His Divine forecast also embrace other heterogeneous products of His gospel—general councils, *e.g.* claiming the inspiration of His own spirit, but dominated in reality by corrupt motives, and made to subserve unworthy and un-Christian objects? Did He prospect as His self-designated vicar such a debauchee as a Borgia, such a tyrant as Hildebrand? Did He contemplate the feuds of orthodox and heretics in which the streets of Constantinople and Alexandria flowed with blood? Did He forecast the massacres of the Albigenses, the St. Bartho-

[1] Comp. the similar speculations of Bishop Thirlwall as to the reasonable anticipations of Christians who lived in the time of Christ, and their frustration by the actual history of the Church. 'One who heard,' he says, 'the last words of comfort addressed by Christ to His disciples might well be led to believe that the borders of the Church were to be enlarged by a series of pacific conquests, and herself to be constantly growing in faith, hope, and charity. Such expectations, however, were, as we know, doomed to disappointment.'—*Remains*, vol. iii. p. 491.

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lomew, the foul deeds of the Holy Office, the martyrdom of so many eminent men whose main fault was sharing His own spirit of religious freedom and reverence for truth? In a word, did He imagine as the result of His efforts to found a kingdom of peace and virtue such a collection of infamous and loathsome crimes as are furnished us by Church history? That to some extent He anticipated war and dissension as an inevitable effect of His mission is shown by His own words, 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. . . . I came not to send peace, but a sword.' No doubt He trusted in the inherent and eternal vitality of His truth—that in the course of ages, and notwithstanding every opposition, it would prove superior to all adverse influences and malign perversities. Meanwhile we may, as I have suggested, take our position at the fountain-head of Christian history and doctrine. Whatever formularies and confessions Churches have evolved in the course of eighteen centuries, they cannot be supposed to override the primary teachings of the Master. On those, at least, I am content to take my stand. The words of Christ, divested of the Jewish prepossessions and hierarchical aspirations of the gospel writers, provide me with aliment sufficient for any reasonable exercise of pious imagination and devout feeling, and they suggest, not a secular and temporary, but a sacred and immutable basis for ethical duty. Furthermore, this Christianity of Christ leaves the future advances of the human mind, its researches into nature, physical science and philosophy, perfectly free. Few thinkers uninfluenced by prejudice and self-will have ever contemplated a godless universe as the sole logical outcome of human investigation, or have conceived themselves to stand in no relation of love, of reverence, or of fealty to the Author of nature. Fewer still have deemed themselves exonerated from the discharge of ordinary obligations towards their fellow-men. And on these two commandments hang not only the law and prophets of the Old, but the gospel of the New Testament. It can be no more a reproach to Christianity that its evidence was not designed to convince a vain and bigoted atheist, or some sanguinary communist, than it can be urged against human law that it refuses to take cognizance of strange, inhuman, and portentous crimes. Every law, whether civil or religious, postulates a certain amount of rationality, susceptibility of being governed, and common sense in those to whom it appeals; and, for my part, I despair of ever finding a speculative creed or a regulative code so comprehensive as to include and provide for all conceivable aberrations of belief and practice.

So far as my acquaintance with Free-*thinkers*—emphasizing the

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second half of the word—extends, and with especial reference to those we propose to discuss, we shall find, if I mistake not, that however much they may have opposed themselves to the excessive ecclesiasticism or system-mongering of this or that Church, there are none who have attempted to contravene the simple maxims of religious and moral duty enunciated by Christ to the Galilæan peasantry.

I have before now had to defend this estimate of genuine Christianity before ecclesiastics of varying grades of dogmatism. Some have objected, 'In ignoring the teaching of the Church you are rejecting Christ,' &c. To this my reply has always been, Either Christ preached the truth, or He did not; either His preaching was sufficient for His hearers, or it was not. If Christ preached the truth, and that truth was sufficient, I am content to accept it, especially as it appeals immediately to my sense of what should be fundamental maxims of religion and morality. Hence I am willing to put off the accidents of time and space which have made me an Englishman of the nineteenth century, instead of a native of Northern Palestine in the time of Christ. I take my place retrospectively among the Galilæan crowd, and listen to the Sermon on the Mount. There is an anecdote told of Cardinal Perron, who was suspected of divers shortcomings from the orthodox creed of his Church, that when on his deathbed the Eucharist was administered to him, he said 'he received it as the apostles received it,'[1] a significant protest against the portentous development the simple rite had subsequently undergone. So I say of Christianity, 'I accept it as they did who first received it.' To those thinkers, and there are many such, who are wearied with the elaborate creeds, the anti-Christian intolerance, the dogmatic tyranny, the sectarian strife of our present-day religion, to whom the air of many of our Churches is vapid, noisome, and debilitating, like that of an overcrowded thoroughfare, the atmosphere of the Galilæan mountain has all the crisp freshness and exhilarating virtues of that of an Alpine pass. There, in the very cradle of Christianity, you perceive its simple, unaffected greatness, its nobility of spirit, its dignified calmness, its gentle and unselfish refinement, its spotless purity. It is like watching the pure, pellucid spring, in some solitary mountain recess, of a river whose mouth, turbid by human contact and commerce, discharges an enormous efflux of water into the ocean. Standing thus on the Galilæan Mount, and listening to the calm, majestic utterances of

[1] *Tallement des Réaux*, éd. Bruxelles, i. p. 79.

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the Saviour, one forgets the many troubled pages in the history of the Church. The contentions of rival sectaries about rival dogmas, the different creeds, articles, and confessions of Christian sects, pale away into comparative insignificance. One forgets, at least for the moment, the scandals and atrocities of Christian dogmatism : the brutal murder of Hypatia, the robber-synod of Ephesus, the cruel sufferings of Nestorius, the subordination of moral to doctrinal purity on the part of the Church, and all the countless anti-Christian and inhuman deeds which, perpetrated in the name of Christ, have disgraced our common humanity.

But though I have found some who have objected to my process as partial and unfair, I have discovered by private interchange of thought among men of my own profession not a few who have adopted a precisely similar method; while of names holding a high place in literature and politics some of the most eminent have similarly fled from dogmatic Christianity to Christ. This, as we shall discover, was the method adopted by some thoughtful Skeptics in our list, *e.g.* Pascal, Huet, Cornelius Agrippa, Montaigne, Charron, and Hirnhaym. It was also the method adopted by the more enlightened of the Reformers, *e.g.* Zwingli, Wiclif, and Melancthon,[1] as well as by such modern thinkers, &c. as Lord Bacon, Locke, Berkeley, Shelley, John Stuart Mill, George Cornewall Lewis, Abraham Lincoln, Emerson—not to mention all the liberal divines of the English and other Protestant Churches.

This tendency seems to me to be on the increase, and I regard the fact as a happy augury for the future of Christendom. It is only on the broad catholic basis of the simple teaching of Christ that any future extension of Christianity can be expected. Already has scientific Skepticism established a state of irreconcilable hostility between its own conclusions and many of the speculative doctrines of different Christian Churches. But with the two great bases of belief in God and moral duty to man it neither has, nor can have, so long as it occupies its rightful position, any quarrel. The constitution of the universe is an eternal guarantee for belief in God. Humanity,[2] its needs and instincts, constitute a pledge

[1] Zwingli's definition of a Christian was, 'Christiani hominis est non de dogmatis magnifice loqui, sed cum Deo ardua semper et magna facere.' Wiclif's principle in relation to all ecclesiastical dogmas was, 'Utile foret ecclesiæ poni in pristina libertate;' while Melancthon's dislike to harsh and excessive dogma was the ruling principle of his life.

[2] See some pertinent remarks on this subject of the general uniformity upon moral questions which prevails throughout the civilized world in G. C. Lewis's *Influence of Authority in Matters of Opinion*, pp. 50, 51.

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hardly less permanent and universal for the obligatory character of pure disinterested ethical action.

No idea of the work of Christ has taken firmer hold of Christendom than that implied in His titles Redeemer, Saviour, &c. While I do not in the least wish to detract from the value of the more exclusively theological applications of these titles, I think they possess other senses of at least equal importance. Indeed, the variety of modes in which the idea of Christ as liberator, and the emancipating tendency of His gospel, has been conceived, seems to me very noteworthy, and to attest in the strongest manner that view of Christianity which, I submit, was set forth by Himself. With St. Paul, *e.g.* He is the deliverer from the curse of the law—the vindicator of the free human conscience from the slavery of Jewish belief and ritual. With the fathers and theologians generally He is the deliverer from immoral bondage. With Luther He delivers from the Roman Antichrist. Servetus calls Him 'liberator clementissime qui toties populum ab angustiis liberasti.'[1] To Cornelius Agrippa, Campanella, Pascal, and other Free-thinkers He is the deliverer from ecclesiastical dogma; while with Savonarola and Lamennais He is the emancipator from political thraldom. It is remarkable that the well-known invitation, 'Come unto Me, ye that travail, &c. . . . for My yoke is easy and My burden is light,' has a primary reference, not as commonly understood to consciousness of sin, but to the dogmatic and ceremonial burdens of the Pharisees. Hence the words may well be applied to those who find their intellect and conscience oppressed by the elaborate creeds and ritual requirements of some modern developments of Christianity. It is Christ's own proclamation of liberty—His protest against extreme dogma in belief or in rite.

Having thus described the teaching of Christ, the primary *regula fidei*, or rather *regula vivendi*, by which all divergences from Christianity must be estimated, we must cast a passing glance at a few of its after-developments. Both the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles agree in asserting the existence of various parties in the early Christian Church. We have now no means of determining with any approach to accuracy the different beliefs and usages which separated them one from the other. Taking, *e.g.* the enumeration of those which divided the Corinthian Church (1 Cor. i. 12), it would be interesting to know wherein the party

[1] Allwoerden, *Historia Michaelis Serveti*, p. 230. For some interesting remarks on what has been called the *Christism* of Servetus, see an able article in the *Theological Review*, July 1878.

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of Apollos differed from those of Paul and Cephas, and of special importance to learn the characteristics of the party of Christ. For my part, I think it not impossible that the last may have held to the simple ethical teaching of Christ without any regard to current controversial questions. No doubt the two great parties are the Petrine and Pauline, or the Jewish and Anti-Jewish. These carry on the conflict between Judaic narrowness and Christian freedom we have already noticed in the teaching of Christ. Hence Paul is, as you know, the direct heir of the liberty which Christ came to announce; to whom, more than any other leader of early Christian thought, the Christian Church is indebted for not relapsing into a mere sect or party of Judaism, though, as we shall see, his presentation of Christian truth is not on all points so free as that set forth by his Master.

The freer aspects of St. Paul's teaching are so well known that the briefest summary of them will serve our present purpose. With him, as with Christ, one main purpose of Christianity is to liberate men from the bondage of Mosaism, and from all thraldoms of a similar kind by whomsoever imposed. But this object, though tending to liberty, assumes with St. Paul a more amplified and dogmatic form than it does in the Gospels. For St. Paul's 'law' is enlarged to 'sin;' and the deliverance from it, which Christ asserts to be virtue and righteousness, is by His Apostle said to be effected by His expiatory death on the cross. As Christ delivers from intellectual and ceremonial bondage, so He does also from that of literalism. This superiority of spirit to letter was a declaration of vast importance for the interests of Christian freedom, and though, like other wholesome principles, liable to abuse, has exercised a beneficent influence on Christian thought and history. Paul also resembles Christ in insisting on the absolute supremacy of conscience. This is the authority which decides for every man the measure of observance he may render both to external acts, *e.g.* as circumcision, keeping the Sabbath, eating prohibited meats, *&c.*, and to more general views of Christian truths. Such directions, as *e.g.* 'Let every man be persuaded in his own mind,' 'Whatsoever is not of faith (*i.e.* conscience) is sin,' are precepts which, with a number of others of the same kind, assert that individualism which within due limits is the only possible guarantee of complete liberty of thought. Nor in harmony with these tendencies must we overlook the many exhortations to peace, forbearance, and love which are found scattered up and down in his Epistles, especially the glowing eulogium of charity and its superiority to faith and hope which we have in 1 Cor. xiii.—

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a passage which, forming part of the authoritative writings of early Christianity, ought to have made intolerance and every approach to it impossible throughout its after-history. This is the spirit by which St. Paul was animated, particularly in the latter portion of his life. Even his animosity to Judaizers ceased directly he found that the principles of universalism for which he contended began to be accepted by the Church.[1] He describes his own tolerant attitude to the different religions and races with which his missionary enterprise brought him in contact in times which savour almost of an indifference to dogmatic truth: 'Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law. To them that are without law as without law, that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.' Like his Divine Master also he was not over-scrupulous as to the particular persons or modes by which the gospel was promulgated. 'Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice,' is his catholic sentiment on this subject. We have interesting exemplifications of his tolerant and persuasive argumentation in portions of his Epistles, and in his dissuasion from idolatry contained in his sermon at Athens.

But by the side of those freer teachings of the Apostle of the Gentiles, a less promising phenomenon discloses itself. In St. Paul's Epistles we have the earliest example of a systematization of Christian truth, the first interpretation of it as an elaborate and involved plan that had employed the Divine counsels from the beginning of the creation. The fall of man and his restoration by the vicarious merits of Christ's death become the two bases of a dogmatic system of which we find no trace in the teachings of Christ. Now with the excellences or defects of this system I as a layman do not profess to meddle. I only avow my opinion that the tendency to a schematic presentation of Christianity, however natural to thinkers who must needs 'philosophize' every subject brought before them, is and must ever be mischievous. The insight it assumes into the counsels of the Eternal; the anxiety it naturally evokes to make every part fit in the complex whole; the tendency it produces to give subordinate and accidental features a preponderance they have no right to claim; the dogmatic and intolerant spirit which the defence of the completed scheme almost

[1] Cf. Pfleiderer, *Paulinism*, Eng. trans. ii. p. 38, &c.

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necessarily entails: all these are so many grave objections to every such formal and inflexible conception of Christianity. I have remarked that this view of Christianity is unwarranted by the teaching of its founder; it is scarcely too much to say that in its main features it is even opposed to that teaching. The love of God represented in the Gospels as a spontaneous, eternally energizing influence, comprehending all men in its embrace, becomes in this scheme a cut-and-dried sentiment, artificially dependent on specified and unnatural conditions which, on various accounts, must remain unfulfilled by the bulk of humanity. An elaborate scheme of redemption or predestination was as far from Christ's simple intuitive teachings as a complicated theory of philosophy or natural science. To St. Paul, therefore, must be ascribed the earliest attempt at solidifying the speculative elements of Christianity, the fruits of which we shall see in Augustine and Calvin, though I cannot suppose that the great apostle of Christian freedom could have foreseen the exaggerated stress which his successors placed upon his dogmatic scheme, or the baneful effects it has produced in the history of Christianity.

Passing over other phases of Christian thought indicated with more or less distinctness in the writings of the New Testament, *e.g.* the metaphysical Christianity of John's Gospel and Epistles, it may suffice to note two especially important facts: (1) the single dogma of the Church of the apostles is Christ. Belief in Him is the sole prerequisite of admission into the Christian community; love to man is the only Christian duty. It is noteworthy that St. John lays especial stress on human sentiments and duties as transcending those that are exclusively religious, in proportion to the greater vividness, tangibility, and practical scope of their objects. In entire unison with the teaching of Christ he proclaims love to man the single proof of love to God, and humanitarianism the highest religious duty. Speculative theology was as yet unknown to the early disciples of Christ. They believed in Him without curiously prying into the how, why, or whence of His Divine authority. His words and His life appealed to their conscience, satisfied their religious needs, and that was enough for them. Whether they conceived His Divine truth as the result of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the man Jesus of Nazareth, or ascribed it to the fact that He was the miraculously incarnated λόγος, was a point of little importance. His eternal veracity attested by their own conscience was in either case the same. Practical Christianity, love and duty to God and man, rose above all such speculative considerations. Moreover, we find that this

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informal, undogmatic structure of primitive Christianity constitutes its main characteristic during the first two centuries of its existence. This truth has been set forth so clearly and forcibly by an eminent patristic authority of our day that I cannot do better than borrow a few of his sentences. In his summary of the theology of the apostolical Fathers, Dr. Donaldson thus writes:[1] 'In respect to theology there is not the slightest attempt to systematize; there is the most absolute belief of certain great truths; there is a determined, unwavering confidence in Christ as the author and finisher of their faith. But there is not the remotest desire to unravel the puzzles which afterwards beset the theological world. There is in their childlike faith an utter unconsciousness of them. Thus they speak of Christ invariably as one individual being. They knew He was the Son of God. They knew He was real man. . . . How this took place, whether He had two natures or wills, in what metaphysical relation He stood to the God and Father of all, these and many such questions never occupied their minds. . . . And again in regard to Christ's death . . . how it could effect such a grand revolution in the souls of men and in the relations of the universe to man, this was a question which did not occupy their minds. And, indeed, it might be easy to show that they had a strong disinclination to any such speculations.

'This unspeculative character of the apostolic teaching the modern Church has to a considerable extent lost sight of, simply because dogmatic theology has now taken the place of practical in many respects. Still those who have deeply considered the subject have been all but unanimous. . . . With regard to outward forms the apostles verged towards indifference. They did not look on baptism as of great consequence; they came to view the observance of Judaistic rites as a matter of convenience and taste, and they regarded the observance of the Eucharist as binding on them because it was a memorial instituted by Him who was their life and the object of intensest love. In the administration of their communities it seems to me that there ruled one great principle, viz. that each Christian man was a king and a priest; that by the indwelling of Christ's Spirit within him he had become a free man in the highest sense of the word. . . . The opinion that there was originally only a broad basis of great truths, not too closely defined, and conceived in a purely practical shape, can alone harmonize with many of the circumstances which will present themselves to us, such as the coexistence of a true Christianity

[1] *The Apostolical Fathers*, Introd. p. 62, &c.

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with materialism, the frequent discussions of the nature of Christ, and the rejection by some of the doctrine of the Divinity of the Spirit. And this broad basis is also the explanation of the extraordinary liberality of the early Church. For I think it will appear that the Church received all who expressed their confidence in Christ, and their willingness to obey Him. They might speculate as they liked. They might even believe Christ their great leader to be of merely human origin. But so long as they were willing to follow Him, and keep in the goodly fellowship of Christians, the Church welcomed them. And I think it will also appear that the early heretics were not expelled from the Church, but that they (the Gnostics among them) first set up certain dogmas, and would fain have confined Christianity to those only who believed these. *They went out from the Church because the Church was too liberal for them.*[1] The Church, however, gradually came to adopt the same course; and we then find an agreement, not in faith in Christ but in belief in certain dogmas, insisted on as the essential characteristic of a Christian.'

In these remarks of Dr. Donaldson, supported as he is by the best Continental authorities[2] who have investigated this subject, I fully concur. Especially noteworthy is his account of the dogmatic tendencies of the early Christian heretics. With every sympathy for Free-thought, and reluctance to limit its fullest expression, we must remember that dissent from a civil or religious community does not necessarily imply a greater appreciation of freedom. It may easily mean a proclivity for system and dogma, a distaste for liberality and comprehension, the attitude of the Petrine party to Paul, 'who came in privily,' as he said, 'to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus that they might bring us into bondage.' At the same time, there are other elements in the history of the early Christian heretics deserving remark and also commendation. They not only testify to the irresistible proneness of men to speculate on all subjects in which they are interested, but they are the outcome of a desire to reconcile conflicting modes of thought. So far as motive is concerned, they are animated by

[1] Dr. Donaldson might have put the same truth in another aspect. They left the Church because the Church was too Skeptical for them, at least in profession. The principle of faith, *i.e.* imperfect certitude, as opposed to knowledge was the stumbling-block which early Christianity presented not only to the Gnostics (the knowers), but to other heresies, *e.g.* the Manichæans.

Comp. *e.g.* Gieseler, *Dogmengeschichte*, p. 39. Neander's *History of Christian Dogmas and Church History*; Moehler, *Literärgeschichte*, pp. 49 and 50.

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the selfsame desire for comprehension which produced the universalist tendencies of Christ and Paul. Unhappily, however, like other shortsighted theological legislators, they sought their object not by abstention from assertion, but by definitive affirmation; not by razing the old party walls and fences to the ground, but by taking their materials and building up new boundaries still more formidable than the old; not by large and broad rules of Christian faith and duty, but by precision and exactness of definition. Gnosticism, *e.g.* is not only the common meeting-point of the opposite currents of Pauline and Petrine tendencies, as Baur said, but it is a vague many-sided movement of thought based upon a desire to amalgamate Christianity into a philosophic whole with Jewish and heathen elements. So Ebionitism was a crude attempt to combine selected elements of Christianity with certain features of Judaism. The system of Basilides represented the junction of Christianity with the philosophy of Aristotle and the Stoics. That of Valentinian was an attempt to interfuse a few aspects of Christian faith into a vast and complicated system of Neo-Platonism and Oriental mysticism. It must be granted that the effect of most of these systems, had they been adopted by the Church, would have been seriously detrimental to the simple faith of Christ and His apostles. They either possessed tendencies to idealization which would have undermined the historical position of Christianity,[1] or their dogmatic proclivities would have destroyed the unartificial character of its teaching. The leaders of primitive Christianity saw the danger, but unhappily took wrong steps to avert it. Instead of insisting on the unspeculative nature of Christ's teaching, instead of firmly determining not to add to His twofold basis of Christian thought and life, instead of asserting the importance of ethical action above all doctrinal teaching, they after a time eagerly followed their beguilers into the thorny labyrinth of religious metaphysics. For every exploration into the abstrusities of theology they attempted another still more rashly enterprising. To every definition of the hidden things of God they opposed another still more definitive, for every exactness of dogmatic phraseology they supplied one still more precise, until between orthodox and heretics there grew up in course of time a formidable rivalry of creeds, definitions, abstruse dogmas, and recondite researches, of which it would be difficult to say which diverged furthest from the teaching of the gospel. This state of things grew worse when the Church obtained from her union with the State the power to persecute, though the heretics so treated, supposing them really inimical to Christianity, appear to me to have exacted the fullest revenge,

[1] Neander, *History of Christian Dogmas*, i. p. 208, Bohn's edition.

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not only in the compassion which a future of religious liberty was destined to extend to them, but in the legacy of dogma and tyranny they left the Church, to the retardation of its free progress and to its lasting disgrace and infamy.

But I am anticipating. Summing up our investigation into the condition of Christianity till the middle or end of the second century A.D., we have seen that no religion could have been as a whole freer and more catholic in its earliest development than that of Christ. Partly because its chief teachers had rightly apprehended the spirit and method of its founder, partly from the necessities of its position, its policy was mild, conciliatory, and comprehensive. Its dogmas were few, simple, and obvious, such as commended themselves to the feelings and intellect of the profounder thinkers both among Jews and Gentiles. Its rites also were simple and easily intelligible. As yet there was no central authority to which the whole of nascent Christendom could appeal. Each Church possessed its own traditions, the legacy of the apostle who first taught it, and no feature in the early history of Christianity is more marked than the diversity of custom and teaching in different Churches, and the freedom and independence which prevailed generally in consequence of such decentralization. For its parent Judaism, Christianity had come to manifest a genial half-depreciatory, half-sympathetic feeling, like that which a child grown to maturity and independence evinces for the fond and foolish fancies of an elderly parent. It neither forbade nor insisted on any of the rites of Mosaism, and its sole demand—no small one, however, for the enthusiastic Jew—was that Christ should be regarded as the Messias, and the Church as the true realization of His kingdom. With heathendom too the attitude of early Christianity was one of peace, recognition, and in a certain measure comprehension. Christianity was not then regarded as the sole Revelation of the Divine Mind that had ever been made to mankind. The influence of the Holy Spirit discernible in the religions both of Judaism and Christianity was also accepted as the inspired source of Gentile wisdom. In this sense Tatian maintained that Christian wisdom was older than Greek philosophy,[1] while other teachers asserted that the doctrines of the Greeks were really derived from Moses. This tendency may be said to have found its climax in the doctrine of Justin Martyr, who maintained that the Logos animated all the best and wisest of the heathen. Similar views occur in the works of Origen,

[1] Cf. Dr. J. Hüber's *Philosophie der Kirchenväter*, a most admirable compendium of patristic thought, well deserving translation into English, p. 20.

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Irenæus,[1] and Clemens Alexandrinus, and they found occasionally a broad generalization even at the hands of such born dogmatists as Tertullian and Augustine, the former of whom said that whatsoever is reasonable is true, and the latter avowed his opinion that Christianity and truth were synonymous terms. This unifying conception is more readily understood when we remember the points of contact which Christianity presented to Gentile modes of thought. The simplicity of its first conception, the spontaneity of its origin, its free undogmatizing character, the fact that its author had left no written requisition of articles of belief to be exacted of all Christians—in a word, the unpositive elements in its structure, adapted it for reconciliation with various modes of speculative thought. But besides these negative conditions of assimilation with other general types of thought, it possessed distinct positive features of similarity with certain specific types of Gentile speculation, and those too which had acquired most ascendency over the human mind at the Christian era. Its message of universal freedom and equality before God, the sacredness of humanity in all its relations, commended it to those who had long craved political, social, and individual freedom, and who were unable to find a basis for it either in the philosophy of the Greek or the instincts of law and order of the Roman. Its practical tendency, its elevation of morality to the highest sphere of religious duty, its inculcation of self-denial, its making the ethical value of an act consist in the intention of the doer, were all points of contact between itself and Stoicism. It possessed numerous points of affinity with the writings of Plato, and its supernatural and inspired character as a Revelation was a special ground of sympathy between it and Neo-Platonism. Its sacred and sacramental rites commended it to those who still reverenced the ancient mysteries.[2] The purity of its family life, its stress upon chastity, could not fail to be appreciated by many who were conscious of the disastrous effects of laxity in such matters among Greeks and Romans. Its inculcation of obedience to secular authorities was in harmony with the law-abiding and orderly instincts of the average Roman citizen, while to those who were wearied with the conflicting theories and conclusions of Greek philosophy it offered a Revelation of religious and moral truth sufficiently obvious to claim recogni-

[1] On the latitude of opinion enjoyed by the Church in Gaul in the time of Irenæus, comp. Ampère, *Hist. Lit. de la France avant Charlemagne*, vol. i. pp. 194, 195.

[2] Comp. Ebert, *Geschichte der Christlich-Lateinischen Literatur*, vol. i. p. 18.

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tion, as well as harmonizing with the best teachings of their foremost thinkers.

For many reasons, however, this conciliatory aspect of Christianity to Gentile thought was only an evanescent phenomenon. Every religion must by the necessity of its existence adopt measures of self-assertion, even if it does not set on foot an active propaganda. It must adopt defensive precautions, even if it does not assume the offensive. Jesus Christ, as we have seen, was not careful to insist on the exclusive superiority of His teaching in such a sense as to oppose it to every form of religious thought in the world, and the small missionary enterprises of the apostles in His lifetime were directed more to the inculcation of a certain spirit than to making proselytes to a creed. The same mild spirit animated the early Christians, with unimportant exceptions, for about a century and a half after the Christian era. Then we perceive symptoms of a new and harsher temper. The growth of Christianity began to be attacked by a corresponding growth of precision in dogmatic statement, and an advance of hierarchical and sacerdotal claims. The gospel of Christ was entering upon the preliminary stages of that ecclesiasticism in which it was finally submerged and lost. The idea of Revelation now began to assume a domineering and exclusive aspect, utterly different from the suggestive appeal to the conscience and the intellect which was its main import in the Gospels. The character of Christ lost much of its meekness and human sympathy in proportion as its supernatural elements were seized, isolated, and exaggerated by the rising dogmatism. The growing contrast between Christianity and heathendom was intensified by the mutual suspicion and hatred produced by persecution. Hence the aim of the apologists of the second century was no longer to prove that many from the east and west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; or, with St. Paul, to argue that God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth; or, with Justin Martyr, to pronounce Gentiles sharers of the Divine Logos. They now laid down a sharp line of demarcation between Christianity and all other modes of thought and life. Heathendom, with its philosophy and its culture, was regarded as the appanage of the devil, while Christianity asserted its exclusive claim to the favour of God as arrogantly as the elder Jewish Church. Now appeared the haughty maxim, 'Extra ecclesiam nulla salus'—a dictum whose anti-Christian implication might not unfairly be expressed by the modified reading, 'In ecclesia nullus Christus.' The earliest exponent of this dogmatic hostility to philosophical Free-thought is Tertullian. In the true

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spirit of religious obscurantism he opposes all inquiry except into things permitted.[1] He asserts that all heterodox beliefs have been engendered by philosophy, calls the philosophers the 'patriarchs of heretics,' of whom he considers Plato the most prolific. The philosopher pursues his own fame only, whereas the Christian strives for truth. What can, he asks, the philosopher and the Christian have in common? the disciple of Greece with that of heaven? the contender for fame with the striver for life? the word-maker with the doer of deeds? the destroyer with the builder of things? the friend with the enemy of error? the falsifier of truth with its restorer, its thief with its guard? Even the wisdom of Sokrates, he thinks, is not to be highly rated. For 'who has known the truth without God? and to whom is God known without Christ? By whom is Christ understood without the Holy Ghost, and to whom is He imparted without the sacrament of baptism?'[2] It is true that in others of his works he speaks in a more conciliatory tone of the relations between reason and Revelation, but the extracts just given show clearly the rising spirit of dogma which was then making inroads into the Church, and which was destined to grow to such an overweening and pernicious extent. Nor is this influence much diminished by the fact that Tertullian's dogma is based upon a pious nescience, and hence upon Skepticism. The opponent of Gnosticism in all its forms must needs rely upon the human ignorance which made a supernatural Revelation a necessity and science a braggart imposition. The doctrine of implicit and uninquiring faith was here opposed to the dogma of a proud self-sufficient knowledge. We shall frequently have to notice how the extremes of Skepticism and of superstitious faith both meet in the defiant utterance of blind and petulant credulity first enunciated by Tertullian, 'Credo quia impossibile.' But in deprecating the rapid dogma-growth of the Church of the second century, I do not of course understand by excessive dogma the mere assertion of the superiority of Christianity over every other form of religious belief. Such a boast was both natural and inevitable, from the point of view of Christians. They could not help seeing that Revelation in its primary acceptation as a communication from God supplied a centre of fixity and certainty which the conflicting tenets of Greek philosophy were very far from affording. The bare idea of a safe harbour after being so long tossed on the waves of human opinion was so delightful that we may pardon an occasional neglect of preliminary soundings. We have thus a double point of contact

[1] Comp. on this point Hüber's *Philosophie der Kirchenväter*, p. 104, &c.

[2] Hüber, pp. 108, 109.

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between Greek Skepticism and Christianity. 1. Christian teachers seized the confessed inability to discover truth which underlies all Skepticism as a plea for a Divine Revelation. 2. And conversely, those who were dissatisfied with the results of Greek thought were the more eager to embrace a system which claimed to be Divine, authoritative, and final.[1] A remarkable example of the effect of Skepticism and despair of philosophical truth in urging men of deep feeling to embrace Christianity we have in the author of the Clementine Homilies. Nearly a contemporary of Sextos Empeirikos, he has discovered, as the great Skeptic did, the weakness of the reason and the contradictions of the various systems of Greek thought. 'From my early youth,' he says,[2] 'being involved in such reasonings, in order to learn something definite I used to resort to the schools of the philosophers. But nought else did I see there than the setting up and knocking down of doctrines, and strifes, and seeking for victory, and arts of syllogisms, and the skill of assumptions, and sometimes one opinion prevailed, as, *e.g.* that the soul is immortal, and sometimes that it is mortal. If therefore at any time the doctrine prevailed that it is immortal I was glad, and when the doctrine prevailed that it is mortal I was grieved, and again was the more disheartened because I could not establish either doctrine to my satisfaction. However, I perceived that the opinions on subjects under discussion are taken as true or false according to their defenders, and do not appear as they really are. Perceiving, therefore, that the acceptance does not depend on the real nature of the subjects discussed, but that opinions are proved to be true or false according to ability of those who defined them, I was still more than ever at a loss in regard of things. Wherefore I groaned from the depth of my soul. . . . And again living in doubt I said to myself, Why do I labour in vain when the matter is clear, that if I cease to exist when I die it is needless to distress myself now when I live? . . . But if I am to exist, what does it profit me now to distress myself gratuitously? And immediately after this another reasoning assailed me, for I said, Shall I not have something worse to suffer then than that which distresses me now, if I have not lived piously? and shall I not be delivered over, according to the teachings of some philosophers, to Pyriphlegethon and Tartarus, like Sisyphos or Tityos or Ixion or Tantalos, and

[1] Comp. Neander, *History of Christian Dogmas*, Eng. trans. vol. i. p. 84.

[2] Cotelerius, *Patres Apost.* vol. i. p. 615. Comp. *Ante-Nicene Library*, vol. xvii. p. 18; Neander, *Church History*, Bohn's trans. i. pp. 44, 45. The same narrative occurs also in the *Clementine Recognitions*.

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be punished for ever in Hades? But again I replied, saying, But there are no such things as these. Yet again I said, But suppose there be? Therefore, said I, since the matter is uncertain, the safer plan is for me rather to live piously.' We need not pursue the path of this typical Christian doubter further: it is enough to say that after exploring different religious systems he finally finds refuge in Christianity. The experiences here narrated were probably common to a select few of the more thoughtful converts from heathendom to Christianity. Hence we perceive that Skepticism had begun to subserve, innocently and unconsciously, the cause for which we shall presently find it employed purposely, *i.e.* as a propædeutic to Christian dogmatic faith. It is, however, quite conceivable that there were some to whom the freedom and elasticity of the early Church afforded a relaxation from the dogmatic aspects of Greek philosophy, just as they did from the harsh and exclusive tenets of the early heretics. What I have adduced serves to show that there was ample room for diversity of opinions within her bounds, so that views and beliefs which were afterwards denounced as heterodox, or at least latitudinarian, were then recognised as varying aspects of a common truth,[1] or as harmless speculations which could not affect injuriously the practice of Christian virtues.

The specific causes of the dogma-development which set in during the second century of the Christian era, and which rendered the free and open exercise of the human faculties an impossibility for some fourteen centuries, I take to have been these: (1) the inherent proneness of men to speculate on all the opinions and problems in which they are concerned, and (2) the no less firmly implanted tendency to accept the result of their speculations as infallible truths, and as such to impose them upon the rest of mankind. With these general dogmatic aptitudes were combined, in the definitive establishment and consolidation of Christian dogma, the following causes:

1. The closing of the canon of New Testament Scriptures.
2. Hierarchical pretensions of the teachers of Christianity.
3. Decrees of councils.
4. Union of the Church with the Roman Empire.

The merest superficial consideration of these agencies will serve to reveal the mode in which they curtailed the liberty of thought pertaining to the earliest phases of Christianity. And this result remains unaffected by what is equally true, viz. that they are to a considerable extent natural products of the planting

[1] Comp. Neander, *Christian Dogmas*, i. p. 82.

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of Christianity at a particular time and under certain circumstances. It is evident, *e.g.* that however desirable or necessary was the selection by the Church of certain writings, in which the life and words of its founder were most truthfully depicted, this could only be effected by the sacrifice of much of the freedom of doctrine and usage that belonged to oral tradition. However natural, again, in view of irresistible human proclivities was the growth of hierarchical ambition, it must have operated to the detriment of a spiritual community of which each member claimed, in virtue of personal fellowship with his lord, the right of being both priest and king. Moreover, if the action of some authoritative centre such as an œcumenical council was needed for securing a measure of uniformity in doctrine and practice, the advantage was only purchasable by the sacrifice of some proportion of the independence hitherto enjoyed by individual churches, as well as by the more generally disastrous result of engendering an intolerant and exclusive spirit inimical to the future welfare of Christianity. The union of the Church with the Roman Empire I regard as, humanly speaking, accidental, though it is to this that we are probably indebted for its surviving as it did the wreck of the empire, and the darkness which followed the barbarian irruption.

It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that these dogmatizing agencies were unattended by others of a different nature capable of counteracting or at least moderating their mischievous effects. No law of nature is more infallible than that reactionary Skepticism treads on the heels of dogma. No principle in the history of human thought is better authenticated than that the human intellect invariably contrives to find a loophole when threatened with excessive repression, enough to breathe at, if not enough to escape by. Hence we find—and the remark is true of every religion founded upon sacred writings—that with the admission of the Old and New Testaments as the authoritative documents of the Church there sprang up various methods of allegorical interpretation, comparisons of various texts, conflicting views of words and meanings, which operated as palliatives of an undue and slavish literalism.[1] Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, together with Origen, Basil, and most of the Greek Fathers, availed themselves of figurative interpretations as often as they

[1] 'L'esprit humain,' says M. Renan, 'sait toujours revendiquer son indépendance. Enchaînez-le à un texte, il saura retrouver sa liberté dans l'interprétation de ce texte; il le faussera plutôt que de renoncer au plus inaliénable de ses droits, l'exercice individuel de la pensée.'—*Averroes*, &c. p. 89.

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pleased, and we have Augustine's own evidence [1] of the effect of thus treating difficult passages in lessening his own Skeptical objections to enter the Church. In fact, the Skeptical instincts of nominalism may be manifested in sacred writings just as much as in formal systems of philosophy.[2] Words can bind no further than the meanings attributed to them, and these must depend in every case on the subjective and personal estimate of those who receive and apply them.[3] Nor was Christian liberty ultimately without some safeguard from the sacerdotalism of the Church and the intolerance of its councils, for one authority, whether of a single individual or of a body of men, might be opposed to another. Indeed, as a fact, the fulmination of one bishop against another, or the decrees of one council anathematized by the next, was no uncommon phenomenon in the history of the Church. Besides which, there was always room for an appeal from ecclesiastical tyranny to the gentle teachings of Christ Himself. Undoubtedly the most powerful of the dogmatizing influences I have enumerated was the incorporation of Christianity into the Roman Empire. This event imparted to every religious tenet the effect of a legal enactment; invested it with a double prestige, civil as well as ecclesiastical; fortified it by a twofold sanction, secular as well as sacred. Moreover, it increased the dogmatic effect of other contributory causes. By its means the utterances of Scripture became more binding and authoritative, sacerdotalism more domineering, councils more arbitrary and dictatorial. The change which the religion of Jesus underwent by this alliance with the powers of this world, however useful in some respects, was nothing less than portentous. Now was seen the practical effects of two centuries' growth in dogmatism and hierarchical ambition. The legitimate effect of dogma is intolerance and persecution; and in the Arian and Priscillian persecutions we perceive what an impassable chasm

[1] See *Essay on the Skepticism of Augustine*, in the next chapter.

[2] It should be noted as exemplifying the irrepressible nature of men's free instincts and their dread of the chains of literalism, that allegorical interpretation is a concomitant of every religion whose source is a sacred text. In most religions it is assigned a technical name, and in some it has an elaborate code of rules and methods of application. Comp., *e.g.* on the allegorism of the Koran, Munk, *Le Guide des Égarés*, ii. p. 197, note.

[3] The somewhat shifty principle of allegorical interpretation was most repugnant to Luther's intensely dogmatic nature. Alluding to the Mahometan allegorists, he says: 'Est enim allegoria tanquam formosa meretrix, quæ ita blanditur hominibus ut non possit non amari præsertim ab hominibus ociosis qui sunt sine tentatione . . . ego itaque odi allegorias.'—*Comm. on Genes.* cap. xxx.

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already separates the gospel of Christ from the Church of the fourth century.

But although I have placed the first distinct symptoms of dogmatic development about the middle or end of the second century, the Church as a whole cannot be said to have possessed a scheme of coherent doctrine until the time of Constantine and the decrees of the first general council. At this point, therefore, we may for the present take our leave of her. We have already seen, and shall have future opportunities of investigating, what defences human reason was able to set up against the now pronounced ecclesiasticism of the Church. From this point it is clear that if Free-thought and inquiry are to have any existence in the Church it can only be in spite of the enormous forces arrayed against them.

In this rapid sketch I have only attempted to indicate broadly the nature of and scope for intellectual liberty which existed in the earliest stages of Christianity, particularly noting the fact that the primary purport of Christ's teaching was undogmatic, that its methods were rational and persuasive, and that, so far from refusing the conscience and intellect of the individual, it was precisely to these sources of authority that it appealed. I am aware that the ground I have hurriedly traversed has been pretty well trodden by historians and philosophers during the last and present centuries; but I may point to that fact for the confirmation of the general conclusion I have independently attained: for now the undogmatic character of Christianity for more than a century after its birth is fully conceded. This common conclusion may doubtless have a different significance, according to the point of view from which it is contemplated. To Roman Catholics, *e.g.* it will seem a plea for the supreme ecclesiastical jurisdiction claimed by their Church. To Protestants it may appear a reason for bibliolatry, while by some theologians, such as Newman, it is an argument for a doctrine of development. It appears to me that its chief and most obvious bearing is as a defence of and sanction for Christian freedom. As such it may well be invoked by every advocate of intellectual and religious liberty, for no Christian community not hopelessly demoralized by dogma could so far stultify its origin as to refuse an appeal to the Magna Charta of the Gospels.

It would be well indeed if both Churches and individuals, forgetting the complicated and speculative systems which Christianity in some of the darkest periods of her history, and often from the most unworthy motives, has compiled, would once more revert to their founder, and insist on no longer creed or more elaborate ritual than He Himself required. Like Antæus in his struggle

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with Herakles, who was invincible as long as he was in contact with mother earth, so Christianity, in its efforts for the moral and spiritual well-being of humanity, might derive fresh strength and fuller liberty by a persistent recognition of the simple undogmatic faith proclaimed to mankind on the hillsides of Galilee.

. . . . . .

ARUNDEL. Thanks, Harrington, for your paper, with some portions of which I agree, while from others I dissent. Had it been read before an assembly of clerics, it would have been, I fear, vigorously denounced as a colourless caricature of Christianity.

HARRINGTON. Dogmatically 'colourless' it may well be, for so I submit was the actual teaching of Christ contrasted with the Pharisaic Judaism which preceded and the ecclesiasticism which followed it. It was precisely on account of its comparatively neutral and colourless qualities—the absence of stress on the requirements of the law of Moses, on the tradition of the elders, that the Jews put Christ to death. A 'caricature' I contend it is not, except on the hypothesis that the teaching of Christ and that of the Churches are inherently incompatible. Were Christ to reappear in our England of to-day, and were to preach the simple truths He taught the Galilæans, I have no doubt His teaching would be deemed 'colourless.' For that matter, I suspect that all ultimate truth, whether in religion or philosophy, is like the sun's rays, absolutely void of colour; and it is only when warped by the prismatic intervention of our imperfect knowledge or our crude methods of analysis that it assumes a variety of hues.

ARUNDEL. Oh, for my own part I don't at all like the excess of colouring which ecclesiasticism has developed by decomposing and destroying the original white ray of Christianity. Nevertheless, similes apart, I should gladly have welcomed a *little* more doctrinal teaching in your exposition of Christianity. It seemed lacking in the requisite elements and conditions of solidarity. It possessed little that was adapted to organize and consolidate individual Christians into a coherent and visible society. To take one significant action of Christ which you omitted to notice, His choice of twelve

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apostles was clearly intended to denote His own will and purpose to found a distinct community with duly authorized teachers possessing well-attested credentials.

HARRINGTON. No doubt the apostles were chosen to propagate the Kingdom of Christ, the consolidating principles of which are the two great commandments of the law; but that He intended His kingdom to be marked off from other communities by any other than spiritual and ethical distinctions, or that He desired to limit its propagation to His own followers, I emphatically deny. You remember, *e.g.* His judgment of those persons whom His zealous apostles forbade when they saw them perform deeds of mercy in Christ's name presumably as the Messias, whereas they followed not their Master, 'He that is not against us is on our part'—a dictum which Lord Bacon calls 'that league among Christians framed by our Lord.'[1] Nor do I conceive that the credentials of the apostles, so far as they were not moral or spiritual, were intended to mark them off from other teachers, or to attest the exclusive sanctity of their mission. You remember the words, 'Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, have not we cast out devils in Thy name?' &c.

ARUNDEL. But my contention is that the teachings you have named, though I grant their primary importance, were not enough to constitute a firm basis for the Church, so that the addition of a few others by the early Church was absolutely necessary.

TREVOR. If your implication is that ecclesiastical unity is attained in proportion to the number, minuteness, &c. of its Dogmas, then I think the whole of Church history is against you. As a rule, the divisions of the Church date from and were stimulated by its dogmatic efforts. (For as to the fundamental points of Christ's teaching, there never was any controversy in the Church.) Hence every Christian creed and confession may be said to have been the seed-plot of a new crop of heretics and dissentients, just as in philosophy we find Skepticism is the natural outcome of excessive and aggressive dogma of every kind. 'It will be ob-

[1] *Opera*, Ellis and Spedding, viii. p. 75.

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served,' says Sir G. C. Lewis,[1] 'that the great controversies between the Christian sects either turn upon questions which have no direct bearing upon human conduct (such as the doctrines of the Trinity or Transubstantiation), or upon forms of Church government and discipline which are matters of positive institution. They rarely turn upon the moral doctrines which are involved in Christianity. Upon these there is a prevailing tendency and approximation to an agreement.'

ARUNDEL. Well, I have a still stronger objection to Harrington's treatment of the Christian Church. In his definition of it, and the enumeration of its claims upon Christians, he omitted the chief—I mean the indwelling and inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

HARRINGTON. Pardon me. I conceded fully the Divinity of Christ, and *ipso facto* the co-operation of the Holy Ghost—the spirit of truth—in every act of His life and every doctrine that He taught.

ARUNDEL. I am aware of that. I am now speaking of the presence of the Comforter with His followers, 'to guide them into all truth' for ever after.

HARRINGTON. Tell me, Arundel, would the Holy Ghost influence Christ's followers and the Church in the same manner in which He operated upon Christ, or in an entirely different manner?

ARUNDEL. Of course in the same manner.

HARRINGTON. Besides being involved in the very notion of the thing, the conclusion you have mentioned is explicitly stated in the *Filioque* clause on which the Western Church has always laid so much stress, is it not?

ARUNDEL. Certainly, and it has a still higher attestation in Christ's affirming the presence of the Comforter with His followers as identical with His own.

HARRINGTON. Now what works for the most part did we observe that Christ, both by precept and example, inculcated?

ARUNDEL. Works of morality, humanity, and religion.

HARRINGTON. We are agreed, I think, that as a mode of religious practice the moral or human works occupied a

[1] *Influence of Authority in Matters of Opinion*, p. 51.

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higher position in Christ's teaching than purely religious, I mean ritual, acts.

ARUNDEL. That I fully concede.

HARRINGTON. So that, on the assumption of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the minds of the apostles, and the after-Church, it would necessarily continue to manifest the same conviction of the superiority of obedience over sacrifice—of ethical action over ritualistic observance?

ARUNDEL (after some hesitation). I suppose so.

HARRINGTON. But I should like something stronger than supposition. If Christ placed morality above ritual, and did so as we are agreed by the influence of the Holy Ghost, an inversion of their positions, so that ritual should be regarded as superior to ethical conduct, and dogmatic purity to moral excellence, would involve a distinct departure from the teaching of Christ—would it not?

ARUNDEL. Of course.

HARRINGTON. And *ipso facto* an influence of a nature opposite to the teaching of the Holy Ghost?

ARUNDEL. True.

HARRINGTON. So that the Church, which should not only place ritual above morality, but should make the former a substitute for the latter, could scarcely claim to be guided by the Holy Ghost?

ARUNDEL. Certainly not. For my part, I should regard the claims of not a few ecclesiastical councils to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost as completely falsified by their own unholy and immoral decisions; while the assertion of Paul IV. that the nefarious deeds of the Inquisition were animated by the Holy Ghost, seems to me worse than blasphemous.

HARRINGTON. Hence the doctrinal development, so styled, which makes the manifestation of the Holy Ghost in the Church not only divergent from but opposed to His operation in Christ Himself, must needs be utterly false and spurious.

ARUNDEL. So it would seem, though the effect of your argument would be a denial of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the Church, and so far of the holiness, truth, and

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authoritative character of its dogmas and teachings. I myself should be loth to allow that as a general proposition, and it would falsify the promises of Christ to His apostles.

HARRINGTON. Take the Church of Rome in the period of its greatest power, you would not, I think, deny that both in its ambitious theory and immoral practice it was as diametrically opposed to the spirit and precepts of Christ as any institution could possibly be.

ARUNDEL. Oh, of course! but you have taken the Church in its most corrupt state. Go to the early Church, that of the first four centuries, or still better that of the apostles, there you must concede the influence of the Holy Ghost.

HARRINGTON. But before I do that, you allow that the Holy Ghost cannot be said to be the ruling spirit of the Church in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. So that if it actually guided the Church of the apostles, it must afterwards have abandoned the Church as a corporate institution. Hence it is a mere question of the century when this abandonment took place.

ARUNDEL. Not quite so fast, Harrington! When the rulers of the Latin and Greek Churches forsook the pure, simple teaching of the gospel, of course they also seceded from its spirit. The moment they did this was the time at which the Holy Ghost may be said to have left them. Still I should not say on that account that He had abandoned the Church; for the Church is the aggregate of all members of the Christian community, and so long as private Christians lived holy simple lives, after the example of Christ, so long would the Holy Ghost be an effective agency in the Church.

HARRINGTON. So that, in affirming the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church, you only assert its agency in isolated individual cases, not in the Church as a spiritual corporation, and therefore not in its rulers, its councils, its dogma-making assemblies of bishops, &c.

ARUNDEL. Of course not. Our 21st Article tells us that no council is infallible, and the 19th admits that all the Christian Churches have erred.

HARRINGTON. What would you say was the test of such error?

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ARUNDEL. The extent of its departure from the life and words of Christ.

HARRINGTON. You allow, therefore, that it is not as a dogma-imposing body that the Church is influenced by the Holy Spirit, but as an aggregate of Christian people, and in so far as each individual fulfils the ethical precepts of Christ?

ARUNDEL. To confess the truth, what I am most anxious to avoid is the tendency to individualism and anarchy which appears to be the legitimate issue of your reasoning. It seems a contradiction to maintain that members of a community may be animated by a certain spirit, while its ruling powers are actuated by motive-influences of quite an opposite kind.

HARRINGTON. Passing over the common fallacy contained in your combination of the terms individualism and anarchy, which implies that the individual as such *can* possess no principle of government, your difficulty appears to me baseless. Take the ruling powers of our own, or, indeed, of any country: does not history teach us that in the majority of cases in which popular rights and instincts have opposed themselves to the ideas and privileges of the ruling classes they have generally approved themselves to be right? Does not this mean that the convictions of private persons may have a greater amount of truth and validity than those of their rulers?

ARUNDEL. But the cases, surely, are not quite parallel between, let us say, the passing of the Corn Law Acts and the dogmas and decrees of a Church Council?

HARRINGTON. They are sufficiently so for the purposes of my argument. My contention is that it is not in the Church as a corporation that we must look for those graces and virtues on which Christ insisted, or which distinctly prove the influence of the Holy Ghost, and hence not in the Church as a dogma-making and creed-imposing power, but in the Church as a spiritual aggregate of Christ-like men and women. Individual Christians, as a rule, have had little to do with the devising or defining the dogmas by which they have afterwards come to be ruled; though where

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popular instincts are profoundly moved by religious questions, their spontaneous action has been on the whole as healthful as in political questions. The Reformation, *e.g.* was essentially a popular movement.

ARUNDEL. So was the French Revolution, and yet look at the wild licence and ruthless barbarity that marked it.

HARRINGTON. Crimes of violence are unhappily common to fanatics of every kind, but the history of Christian dogma is able to furnish more instances of them than can be found in secular history since the Christian era. Moreover, even the crimes of political history, since the same period, may be traced indirectly to the domineering and tyrannical spirit of ecclesiasticism. The French Revolution was, almost as much as the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, brought about by the Church, for it was a result of despotism, injustice, and oppression, which the corporate Christianity of Romanism, so far from attempting to repress, as in obvious duty it was bound to do, actually upheld and confirmed.

ARUNDEL. The purport of your argument seems to be to deny the necessary inspiration of every dogma of the Christian Church after the time of Christ.

HARRINGTON. Without entering into details, such is, I admit, my opinion. I could have wished the Church to have preserved always the elasticity and undogmatic character of its earliest foundation. So long as men obeyed the two commandments of the gospel, so long as they acknowledged the spiritual authority of Jesus Christ as the founder of the Christian kingdom, everything else should be allowed to be matter of choice and expediency.

ARUNDEL. What about the Sacraments?

HARRINGTON. I would have them regarded as expedient, as aids to morality, not as universally obligatory. Their magical virtues stand for me on the same footing as witchcraft.

TREVOR. Pardon me, but I think your discussion is entering upon difficult ground, and it is not always expedient to pronounce dictatorially on expediency. I was about to observe, as to your argument of the Holy Ghost in the Church, that it is not only the moral test of any

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such inspiration which seems wanting, but also the intellectual test.

ARUNDEL. What do you mean, Doctor?

TREVOR. I mean that the claim of the Church of Rome to be guided by the spirit of truth is not only refuted by its placing belief and ritual above ethical action, in flagrant opposition to the Gospels, but also by the absurd superstitions in which persons and councils claiming to be guided by Him undoubtedly believed. If the Holy Spirit was unable to guard fathers and councils from such transcendental absurdities as, *e.g.* witchcraft, divination, and even from grotesque perversities in the interpretation of Scripture, we may surely hesitate to believe that He could direct the same intellects and assemblies into valid and infallible determinations upon such mysteries as the nature of God or of the world to come.[1]

ARUNDEL. That argument has a dangerous two-edged power. We might as well object to Christ's own teaching, which we ascribe to the same spirit of truth, that it ought not to have sanctioned such a superstition as, *e.g.* demoniacal possession, on which ground we might claim to refuse the acceptance of His religious and ethical instruction.

HARRINGTON. Excuse me, Arundel. Your analogy is somewhat superficial, for the following reasons: 1. The representation we have of Christ is by the medium of writers who were themselves grossly superstitious, and whose superstition is more than once corrected by Himself. 2. Even allowing the narratives to stand as they are, Christ nowhere demands belief in demoniacal possession, nor, indeed, in miracles of any kind, as a condition of Christian life; on the other hand, He frequently repudiates a merely thaumaturgic faith. 3. Demoniacal possession may be regarded as a crude expression of the physical nature or affinities of moral evil, and hence coming within the scope of Christ's action as a moral teacher. 4. The acceptance of Christ's religious and moral teaching must in the last instance be based on His own foundation for it, *i.e.* the reason and conscience of the receiver, whereas fathers and councils frequently

[1] Compare on this argument Bishop Thirlwall's powerful and eloquent remarks, *Remains*, vol. iii. p. 397.

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insisted on such beliefs as a *sine quâ non* of orthodoxy *ab extra*, and quite irrespectively of personal conviction.

ARUNDEL. You have just reminded me that your mode of dealing with the Gospels is rather lax and arbitrary. Indeed, this was one prominent feature of your paper. Of course, by a judicious selection of what suits our point of view and a careful elimination of all opposite and discordant elements, we might prove almost anything from the Gospels.

HARRINGTON. I suppose you would allow that it is right, at least not wrong, to follow the example of Christ?

ARUNDEL. Certainly, though I can't quite see the bearing of such a very obvious proposition on our subject.

HARRINGTON. If Christ deals in a particular manner with the writings of the Old Testament, His followers cannot be impugned for treating in a similar manner the writings of the New Testament.

ARUNDEL. Of course not.

HARRINGTON. Well, it seems to me that in His treatment of the law and the prophets Christ especially employed this principle of judicious selection for which you blame me. Of the law of Moses He selects the *résumé* which occurs in two verses of Deuteronomy, says not a word of its thaumaturgic elements—the events in the national history of which the Jews were all so proud—does not refer to sacrificial or ceremonial requirements of law as matters of general observance, and preserves a significant silence as to others of its aspects on which His countrymen laid particular stress.

ARUNDEL. At any rate the intellectual criterion of the presence of the Holy Ghost does not appear to me very valid, for it would imply an interference with the laws which govern the ordinary intellectual progress of humanity. Hence I should not regard the Church's opposition to Galileo as any conclusive proof of its defective inspiration, in the same way that I should the enormities of Alexander VI. or the deeds of the Inquisition.[1]

[1] Bishop Thirlwall seems to imply, though he expresses himself with characteristic caution, that the moral corruption of the Church may be ascribed to the reluctance of the Holy Ghost to interfere with the freedom of the human will. Of the two, it is easier to conceive that the intellectual error of the Church may be due to His refusal to interfere with the laws

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TREVOR. As an apology for the Church, and from its own point of view, your distinction is baseless. The Church never discriminated, *i.e.* openly and consciously, between intellectual and moral truth. The spiritual insight capable of pronouncing on the one was assumed to include apprehension of the other. I may add that my argument of the claim to the possession of the Holy Ghost being prejudicially affected by intellectual ignorance is distinctly sanctioned *quantum valeat* by Augustine,[1] who on this very ground refutes the title of Manes to the name and influence of the Paraclete. He does not seem to see that the argument is equally applicable to the exclusive claim of the Church to the guidance of the same spirit.

MISS LEYCESTER. I think you gentlemen are arrogating more than your fair share of the discussion. I have long been wanting to ask Charles what, on his hypothesis, becomes of the definition of Christianity as a *Revelation*. You can hardly say that a new Revelation was needed to teach men that it was wicked to murder or steal.

HARRINGTON. You must bear in mind, Florence, that all that I purported to comprehend in my paper was the aspect Christianity bore to Free-thought: there are other phases, doctrinal, devotional, &c. which did not come properly within my province. Moreover, I do not know that I am concerned to defend all the technical terms Christian dogmatism has devised generally for dictatorial, self-assertory purposes. What is called Christ's Revelation, He Himself termed His kingdom. That He proclaimed His teaching as a disclosing or unveiling of truth, differing in kind from all preceding conceptions, I utterly deny. Nor can I find that He often employed the term 'new' to qualify His teaching. On one occasion He certainly says, 'A new commandment I

which ordinarily regulate the course of human progress, morality being much less affected by growth and evolution than knowledge. Of course if both the moral and intellectual guidance of the Holy Ghost in the Church be denied, there is no province left for the exercise of His functions. It may also be alleged against the bishop's argument that some limitation or influence over the will is necessarily implied in every doctrine of grace.'—Thirlwall's *Remains*, vol. iii. p. 489.

[1] *Confess.* lib. v. chap. v.

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give unto you,' but this is none other than the second of the great precepts which He derived from the older law, so that at most the 'newness' could only have been the new form of or else the additional sanction or emphasis placed on an old command. That this was especially needed in the time of Christ, as a forcible vindication of the obligatory and religious character of ethical duties, will hardly be denied.

MISS LEYCESTER. May we then assume—for that seems the outcome of your reasoning, that Christianity is, as Tindal said, 'as old as the Creation'?

HARRINGTON. If I were a theologian, accustomed to base every opinion and even every truism on textual authority, I should ask you to consider the implication of John's account of the Logos, 'The same was in the beginning with God,' or the text, 'Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' Being, however, only a layman, and pledged to use the ordinary standards of reason and common sense, I say that no conceivable charter of authority can be ascribed to any religion greater than that it is coeval with the world and humanity. Ritter in his history[1] speaks of 'Das Ewige im Christenthum,' discriminating in a single phrase between what is accidental and temporary and what is absolute and eternal in Christianity. It is the prerogative of truth to be everlasting, and of all natural laws to be universally binding. The attempt of theologians to limit all truth to the actual time and teaching of Christ, independently of the contradiction of such an opinion to His own explicit declaration, can only be maintained by a fatal undermining of the justice and providence of God. At the same time I humbly conceive that Christ does not merely transmit older truths to after-ages in just the same form as He received them. Both the service to God and duty to man which He inculcated

[1] His words are worth quoting. Speaking of creeds and religious formularies, and acknowledging in some respects their utility, he adds: 'Halten wir uns doch daran, dass jeder sprachliche Ausdruck über Dinge der Religion dem Wechsel unterworfen ist, kaum ohne Veränderung des Sinnes aus der einen in die andere Zeit, viel weniger aus der einen in die andere Sprache, übertragen werden kann, und dass daher das Ewige im Christenthum durch solche wandelbare Formen nur schwach zu bezeichnen ist.'—*Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. v. p. 9.

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receive a new enhancement, a fresh accession of spiritual energy, from His words and life.

ARUNDEL. There I heartily agree with you. . . . But it is not only with Tindal among English Deists that you can claim some *rapprochement*. Your mode of interpreting Christianity is substantially that of the 'moral divines' of the last century. Indeed, for a considerable part of your essay you were industriously belabouring the well-thrashed chaff of those eminent men, not to mention earlier and later operators with the critical flail on the same husks, which of course I don't deny to have once contained good grain, but only assert to have been thoroughly emptied of it for a considerable period.

HARRINGTON. I am quite aware, my dear Arundel, of the essential harmony of my view with that of a good many philosophical inquirers who have approached the question of Christianity without ecclesiastical bias or prejudice. My concern in view of our subject is to determine the original code, the Magna Charta, if I may so phrase it, by which our Skeptics in their several divergences from Christianity may be judged.

ARUNDEL. Well, professionally, and I dare say unconsciously, you were inclined, I think, to play the advocate, and to strain a point in favour of our Skeptics. Your proposed code or standard bore a slight *soupçon* of being a piece of *ex post facto* legislation, and to be arrived at in this way: given men with a minimum of Christian belief, it is required to find a form of Christianity so comprehensive as to include them.

HARRINGTON. Which is, at least, as good policy, and infinitely more in harmony with Christ's own teaching and practice, than the one your profession is much too fond of defending, *i.e.* given men with a maximum of faith—including creeds, dogmas, and superstitions not even *named* by Christ—it is required to devise an original framework of Christianity which will include and authenticate them, as well as exclude all others not endued to an equal extent with powers of credulity, or perhaps possessing a greater share of critical fastidiousness.

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ARUNDEL. At all events, if your 'charity' is the virtue that hopeth all things, I don't think you can claim for it the merit of 'believing all things.' But I am anxious to hear what can fairly be alleged in defence of what seemed to be an excess of individualism. If the conscience and reason of the Christian be the supreme authority for all truth whether revealed or not, what bonds of cohesion are left to prevent the Church or Christian community falling to pieces like a rope of sand? Harrington refused a while ago to allow my junction of individualism with anarchy: to me, I confess, they seem allied, if not as synonyms, at least as cause and effect.

TREVOR. To me, on the other hand, if I may take up the gauntlet you have thrown down, individualism, when set up as a bugbear to frighten men from due self-reliance and Free-thought, seems the emptiest of inanities. From the very nature of the case—the natural constitution of man and his relation to the universe—the term can never be more than relative and limited. Conceive the most unlimited freedom of human thought and action. Set up the individual above the community, and even the race. What do you thereby effect? At most only a moderate and limited singularity. Imagine, *e.g.* that all the experience and traditions of humanity in respect of food and drink were suddenly abolished, and tell every man he may eat and drink what seems best to his individual fancy, and we know the inevitable result: the general experience of mankind would soon assert itself, and dominate, with rare exceptions, over individual eccentricity. So far from anarchy, as a state of things in which no ruling principle exists, being the outcome of such unrestricted liberty, the very experiment of granting it would demonstrate the impossibility of anarchy. The same argument is also applicable to religious and political freedom, though in the spiritual and mental requirements of men there is obviously more room for variation than in their physical needs. Let men have all the religious and social liberty that can be desired with due respect to the equal rights of others, their relation to the universe will necessitate to an overwhelming majority the postulate of a deity or some equivalent power as the source of the laws of the universe, while their relation

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to each other, their sharing common instincts and common wants, will make mutual help and love, in other words, morality, the foundation of their social existence. Hence I say, let us not be deterred by an apophthegm of doubtful truth from insisting on as much individualism as is necessary to human liberty. As the world and humanity are constituted the fear will always be not of anarchy but of panarchy, if I may coin the word, *i.e.* the merging of all individualism in a despotism, intellectual, religious, or otherwise, in which every rule and prescription are imposed *ab extra*, and maintained as an imperious and infallible dogma.

HARRINGTON. On the whole, I agree with you, Doctor. History clearly proves that the besetting sin of humanity and the leaning of the majority is not towards anarchy in the sense of individual independence, as much as towards panarchy, as you call it. I was about to answer Arundel's objection, and concurrently to illustrate the position I would assign to the fundamental points of Christianity in this way. Half a dozen men, we will suppose, are intently surveying a landscape. With eyes of different powers, every man sees his own prospect, and that only. The horizon looks nearer or farther, and objects close to it seem greater or smaller, or assume in other ways a different appearance, according to the eye-power in each particular case. Now, if every one possessed the means of transmitting to paper with the rapidity and precision of a photographic lens his own particular view, we should no doubt find all of them differing in minor respects each from the other. But we should also find this, that every view had the same general characteristics. The foreground, the prominent objects, would be alike in every case; we should discover that it was mostly in the distant objects, or those placed in a peculiar position with regard to the beholder, that differences occurred; in other words, the individual peculiarities would bear no proportion to the general sameness. Now this is what Christianity did for mankind. Christ did not formulate a number of intellectual and speculative beliefs. He did not attempt to fill the canvas of the minds of His indi-

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vidual hearers, still less of all future history. A few foreground truths on which there could be no possibility of dispute among religious or humane persons were all that He insisted on.

ARUNDEL. One question more before we break up. If, as your paper maintained, Christianity is based upon individualism, if Christ was careless, as you appear to think, of amalgamating His followers into a distinct and definite community, what becomes of your old position as a loyal defender of a State Church? For on your premisses a Church as a self-legislating, dogma-making power has no right to exist, and in that case cannot claim to be supported by the State.

HARRINGTON. As to Christ's own teaching, of course He says no more on the mutual relation of the Church with the State than He does on any other complicated problem of political or social arrangements to which the progress of history has given birth. But for my part I see no reason why Christ's life and teaching may and ought not to be held up, by special provision of any State calling itself Christian, to the admiration and imitation of its citizens. The actual organization or machinery by which this object is accomplished seems to me a matter of secondary importance. What is most to be guarded against is any undue infringement of Christian liberty, whether by the secular tendencies of the State, or the sacerdotal instincts of the Church, or any portion of its ministers. After all, the best type of a Church, whether State or not, and which gives most freedom to its members, is that which comes nearest to the teaching of Christ; whose dogmas are few and obvious, whose worship is simple and unsuperstitious, whose injunctions are mainly ethical and humanitarian, whose basis is broad and catholic, and whose sympathies, like its Founder's, are free, generous, and comprehensive.

TREVOR. Nevertheless, you appear to me to have missed the strongest argument for the formal alliance of Christianity with the State, viz. their sharing to a great extent similar aims and objects. Christianity—I mean that of Christ—is the highest expression of ethical and social duty, the supreme form and eternal embodiment of that justice and morality

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which are the objects of all legal enactments, and the bonds of all civilized communities. Hence it consecrates and imparts a religious flavour to duties which might conceivably suffer by a too secular or merely political presentation. On the other hand, had Christianity in its essence and most authoritative aspect consisted merely of ritual observance beyond what was needful as the simple outward expression of religious feeling, or if it could be fairly interpreted as pure sentiment and unrelated to practical morality—in either case, the State might decline to connect itself with it. As it is, by adopting the teachings of Christ, justice, rectitude, self-denial, duty—the bases of wise human conduct and the foundations of State policy—are all idealized and religionized, raised to a higher level of thought, and invested with perennial sanctions. They are conceived, to use Spinoza's phrase, *sub specie eternitatis*.

ARUNDEL. Your exposition of the relation between Church and State seems to me inadequate, and it leaves the clergy open to the reproach *quantum valeat* of Sacerdotalists, that they are only a department of the State, a kind of ecclesiastical police.

TREVOR. That is surely unavoidable whenever Christianity is accepted as involving primarily ethical duty and as opposed to ecclesiasticism. Pharisees and Sacerdotalists have in all ages decried the conception of human duty which does not proceed from ritual service, but Harrington has reminded us what Christ's own estimate of this over-religionism was. . . . But I think it is time we were on our road to Hilderton, so I move our immediate adjournment.

. . . . . .

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EVENING VIII.

THE SKEPTICISM OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

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φαμὲν τοίνυν ἐνθένδε γυμνῷ τῷ λόγῳ, τὴν φιλοσοφίαν ζήτησιν ἔχειν περὶ ἀληθείας καὶ τῆς τῶν ὄντων φύσεως· ἀλήθεια δὲ αὕτη περὶ ἧς ὁ κύριος αὐτὸς εἶπεν, Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀλήθεια.

CLEM. ALEX. *Strom.* i. ch. v. Potter's ed. i. 335.

'Setting forth the Church as the way to Christ, instead of setting forth Christ as the way to the Church, has been a fountain of unnumbered evils.'

BISHOP EWING.

'The plague of the Church for above a thousand years has been the enlarging our creed and making more fundamentals than God ever made.'

BAXTER.

'Il faut faire une grande différence entre ce qu'un homme croit par l'efficacité de la foi, et ce qu'il avoue ingénument que la Raison lui suggère sur les dogmes de la Religion.'

BAYLE, *Dict.* art. 'Charron.'

'O æterna veritas, et vera caritas, et cara æternitas, Tu es Deus meus.'

AUGUSTINE.

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EVENING VIII.

THE SKEPTICISM OF ST. AUGUSTINE.[1]

MRS. HARRINGTON. I suppose that mental like physical travelling brings us acquainted with strange company. It seems difficult at first sight to perceive our right of including Augustine in our researches. He was, or is esteemed to have been, one of the main pillars of dogma in the Christian Church. 'Saul among the prophets' seems a far less striking example of misplacement than 'Augustine among the Skeptics.'

[1] The following works are referred to in this chapter:—

Augustini Opera omnia. Ed. Benedict. XI. vols. fol. Paris 1689. But the *Confessions* are quoted from the edition of the *Bibliotheca Patrum.* Oxon. 1838.

Bindemann, *Der Heilige Augustinus.* 3 vols. 1844–69. This is, on the Protestant side, by far the most exhaustive work on Augustine.

La Philosophie de Saint Augustin. Par Nourisson. Paris 1866.

Histoire de St. Augustin. Par M. Poujoulat. 2 vols. 12mo. Paris 1852.

Études sur Saint Augustin, son génie, son âme, sa philosophie. Par l'Abbé Flottes. Paris 1861.

Saint Augustin et la liberté de conscience. Par M. Saint-René Taillandier. *Revue des Deux-Mondes,* vol. xx.

Bossuet, *Défense de la Tradition et des Saints Pères. Œuv. Comp.* ii.

Die Philosophie der Kirchenväter. Von Hüber. München 1859.

Geschichte der Christlich-Lateinischen Literatur, von ihren Anfängen bis zum Zeitalter Karls des Grossen. Von A. Ebert. Leipzig 1874.

Histoire critique des principaux commentateurs du Nouveau Testament, &c. Par M. Simon. To this work Bossuet's *Défense de la Tradition et des Saints Pères* is a reply, though, after the manner of his Church, more declamatory and abusive than erudite and critical.

Of Church Histories, those most worth consulting on Augustine are Neander, vols. iii. and iv., Bohn's trans., Gieseler, Milman and Robertson.

Of the Histories of Philosophy, Ritter is very valuable, vi. 153–188; so is also De Beausolve's *Histoire de Manichée.* 2 vols. 4to.

The best dictionary articles on Augustine are in the *Dictionnaire des Sciences Philosophiques,* in the *Nouvelle Biographie Générale,* and Herzog, *Encyclopädie.*

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TREVOR. If you remember, Mrs. Harrington, we are already pledged to include Augustine: and our resolution to that effect is amply justified, for the following reasons:

1. We may plead a precedent: he has already been classed among Skeptics in Staudlin's History, the learned author of which terms him 'dieser talentvolle Zweifler,'[1] and indirectly his Free-thought has been recognised and commented on in the general histories of philosophy.

2. He was, by his own confession, a Skeptic for nearly half of his life.

3. Although he subsequently became a dogmatist, and a severe and rigid one, yet even his final theological convictions were strongly coloured by his prior contact with Skepticism and Free-thought.

4. His works, even those written in the interests of dogma, have exercised considerable influence on the Free-speculation of succeeding times.

ARUNDEL. Let me suggest two other reasons why we should discuss the great Bishop of Hippo in relation to Free-thought. 1. He is the most remarkable example we shall meet with of the progress of a keen speculative intellect from Skepticism to Christian certitude, without adopting any such doubtful expedient as Twofold Truth. 2. After discussing, as we have, the beginnings of Christianity, Augustine, the child of a heathen father and Christian mother, will come in opportunely to test the growth of Christian dogma in the fourth century A.D.

MRS. HARRINGTON. I am more than satisfied. I fear my ignorance of patristic studies induced me to underrate Augustine's Skepticism.

TREVOR. Your error is not uncommon. Theological writers of all ages are only too anxious to draw a veil over the intellectual and moral 'wild oats' of the great champion of Latin orthodoxy. Hence Augustine as a dogmatist, a prominent Christian bishop, a defender of ecclesiasticism, has quite eclipsed the Skeptic, the restless Free-thinker, the Pagan rhetor of the first thirty-three years of his life; and the error, however natural from some points of view, is the

[1] *Geschichte des Skepticismus*, i. p. 534.

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less excusable in reality because the methods and teachings of his dogma-period, and his undeniable ability in employing them, were results of his Skeptical training, as I hope my paper will abundantly prove.

HARRINGTON. Well, as long as the 'Confessions' are read, we need not be afraid that the halo of the saint will ever by its dazzle hide the faults of the sinner. The book certainly gives one the impression of absolute truthfulness in matter, though doubtless forced and rhetorical in manner.

ARUNDEL. The reluctance Trevor speaks of to disclose the faults of great men may arise from other causes than undue respect for their fame and the services they have rendered humanity. For my part I both dislike and suspect the excessive candour which, for whatever reason, reveals to the world the depths of degradation into which passion and folly may have betrayed any man. Hence I think Augustine might as well have omitted several passages of his 'Confessions.' His is a prominent example of a tendency frequently found in religionists of an effusive type, to exaggerate their infirmities in order to enhance their merits in having escaped them, or by way of contrasting present attainment with former unworthiness, just as a successful merchant sometimes boasts that he began his career with only sixpence in his pocket. Of course the ascribing every religious or moral progress to Divine aid is a *sine quâ non* of all piety. What does not seem equally pious or wise is the ostentatious parade of what may have been a degrading starting-point. So that, when Augustine calls God as 'Deus meus' to bear witness to the immoralities of his early life, the invocation is needless as addressed to Omniscience, and of doubtful utility as obtruded on the gaze of fallible humanity. The approval of the work by an immoral sentimentalist like Rousseau is almost a sufficing condemnation of a considerable portion of it.

HARRINGTON. Leaving out cases like Rousseau's, in which the tendency you speak of may be both needless and hurtful, we must, I think, make a special exception of Augustine's 'Confessions,' both on account of their psychological profundity and their religious philosophy, attributes

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which render the work unique among religious autobiographies. From the point of view of his final acquisition of Christian certitude, he surveys retrospectively the halting steps and devious paths by which he conceives himself to have attained it. The sun of religious and moral perfection, in whose beams he rejoices, seems to cast a reflected light on all his past explorations and search for truth. Hence every impulse however misguided, every propension however apparently evil, assumes for him a new aspect. His moral and intellectual restlessness is only the blind, erring efforts of the soul in its instinctive search for God. Every false love was but the vagrant inarticulate expression of a craving which could find satisfaction only in the Infinite. His greatest errors are so far sanctified that they are the outcome of a passionate longing after certainty. No doubt he confesses and bewails his faults, both intellectual and moral, but it is with a half-sympathetic consciousness that in the mysterious decrees of Providence they have been 'stepping-stones of his dead self,' to use the poet's expression, towards a higher and nobler existence.

TREVOR. You have just touched upon one of the most striking contradictions in Augustine's character—I mean the union for a considerable part of his life of large-hearted, comprehensive sympathies with a continually hardening and exclusive dogmatism. Nothing can better illustrate the refrigerating power of sacerdotalism and dogma than the fact that they were enough to congeal the human sympathies, the emotional tenderness, the mystical depth and fulness of feeling which belonged to Augustine's better nature. His 'Retractations,' or, as that work might not unfairly be named, his 'Apology for overmuch indulgence in the ecclesiastical vices of comprehensiveness and Christian charity,' is a dismal catalogue of the products of the dogmatic ice-machine. Richard Simon, the father of modern Biblical criticism, used to say that he preferred Augustine's retracted opinions to his definitive tenets. Indeed, his negations transmuted into affirmations would form a judicious and Christian creed, just as the 'Index Librorum Prohibitorum' may prove a valuable guide to the best literature.

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MISS LEYCESTER. With regard to Augustine's contribution to Christian dogma, I suppose we ought to believe, at least most Christians do believe, that the specific course which the stream of Christian doctrine took was directed by Divine wisdom. I must say that it appears to me to have been mainly the result of political accident and policy. Such, at least, was the conclusion I derived from Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall.' Jerome remarked that the encouragement which Constantius gave to Arianism had almost produced the effect of horrifying the Christian world by the discovery that it had become Arian. I have often asked myself, Suppose it had, what would it have signified? It seems preposterous to say that the Christianity of Christ and the Gospels could have been prejudicially affected by such an event. No doubt there would have been other terms and formulæ. The Nicene Creed, *e.g.* would have assumed a different shape, but both the orthodoxy and the heresy of the fourth century had already departed so far from the simplicity and practical genius of Christ's teaching that the question of their own mutual differences is comparatively of small importance. Imagine the Arian controversy as an outgrowth of future Christianity submitted to Christ for decision, with its purely speculative import, its minute points of difference, the distinction, *e.g.* between a vowel and a diphthong,[1] the bitter rancour, animosity, and even bloodshed of which it was the cause. With what holy scorn would He have denounced the dispute, and every section and subsection of the parties concerned in it! The burdens imposed on the Christian conscience by His own followers He could not but have acknowledged were infinitely heavier than those of the Pharisees which He so vehemently reprobated, while the zeal of each party in proselytizing had notoriously the precise effect He so forcibly described in the case of converts to Pharisaism.

ARUNDEL. I should be ready to concede for my part

[1] Boileau's satirical lines are well known (*Sat.* xii.):—

'Tu fis, dans une guerre et si triste et si longue,
Périr tant de Chrétiens—martyrs d'une diphthongue.'

Unluckily, the poet thought fit to alter in the later editions of his satire this incomparably terse and vigorous expression.

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that more stress than was right or needful was placed upon the differences between orthodoxy and heresy in many instances—Arianism being one. At the same time we must bear in mind the standpoint of such men as Augustine, Jerome, Athanasius in the Arian controversy. It was not merely the relation between Jesus of Nazareth and His Father that occupied their minds. By means of the Neo-Platonic and Alexandrian philosophy interfused into early Christianity, and of which we have traces in the fourth Gospel, they had elevated themselves to a high metaphysical platform, on which ordinarily slight differences became of considerable moment. Conceive, *e.g.* God as absolute truth —Augustine's favourite conception—and Christ as the embodiment of truth. Now it is the inherent property of all truth to be eternal. Hence Christ, as truth, must have been so coeternal with the Father that it is impossible to say there ever was a time when He did not exist—which was what the orthodox maintained.

HARRINGTON. No doubt the leaders of Christian thought were expert enough in transcendentalizing any question that presented inexplicable difficulties in a concrete form. Nor would I deny the legitimacy of such a process in metaphysical theology. It is, however, liable to abuse. Too often theologians, like mystics and cuttle-fish, escape pursuit by enveloping themselves in their self-raised obfuscations. As to Florence's question, its purport is, What is the use of dogma regarded as a part or proof of a possible Divine guidance of the Church? My own opinion is, there is no valid proof of any guidance except the very un-Divine, I should say the intensely human, one, of sordid greed and hierarchical ambition. On the whole, the history of the Christian Church—I speak of course of the corporate body—from the third to the fifteenth centuries appears to me a retrogressive movement, whose real object and only conceivable consummation was the utter thraldom of humanity. Still, as another possible answer to Florence's suggestion, I may mention a theory which I first heard from a professional friend who, like myself, seeks to enliven the dry-as-dust pursuits of law by occasional incursions into philosophy and

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theology. On my once asking him what, under the hypothesis of a Providence in history, was the best account he could give of the *rôle* of ecclesiastical dogma, he replied: 'In my opinion, to preserve intact the germ of Christianity, *i.e.* the genuine, historical, human Christ. We may regard this central truth like a kernel inclosed in some half-dozen shells, husky rinds, and involutions of various kinds and thicknesses. In order to arrive at it we must first break and throw away the ecclesiastical shell, then the dogmatic shell, next the thaumaturgic shell, lastly the eschatological or purely Jewish shell. It is only by peeling and cracking in this way that we arrive at the kernel. Now,' he added, 'it is just this process of shell-breaking that we see at present going on around us—the relaxation of dogma in modern Churches and peoples, the large increase of tolerance and charity, the distinct subordination of petty definitions of speculative teaching to large aspects of practical truth—which to the terrified ecclesiastic assumes the form of Skepticism. To my mind the process is both inevitable and wholesome. The millennium of Christianity will arrive when men are able of themselves to discriminate between what is real in historical Christianity and what is fictitious, between the original Divine deposit and the adventitious human accretion, between what is permanently valuable and what can never be more than temporarily so.'

ARUNDEL. Your friend must have wielded a most potent pair of nut-crackers. I wonder he confined his operations to the hard shells, and did not extend them to the kernel itself, as so many of his analytical temperament are apt to do. He might have found it equally incapable of resisting such well-directed critical pressure. Hence, like the fool in the story who was persuaded that an onion was a curious kind of nut inclosing a delicious kernel, by the time he peeled off the last coat he must have found—at least he was in danger of finding—nothing for his pains.

HARRINGTON. I presume he pursued his investigations till he came to what he could masticate without danger to his teeth, swallow without straining his deglutition, and assimilate without indigestion—the ordinary object,

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I may add, of all nut-cracking, whether physical or intellectual.

TREVOR. To me the theory you have quoted seems quite paradoxical. It is certainly a novel view to take of the uses of dogmas, which are generally assumed to be obstructive and determinedly hostile to all new truth, that they really serve to guard and protect it. Your friend seems to have been misled by a false analogy. New truth is not for the most part contained in the old, but has an independent origin and existence of its own: there is a polemical relation between them until the new discovery has triumphantly vindicated its claims to superiority. The theory has also a further defect of ignoring the positive mischief of those various dogma-shells, *i.e.* their assuming the appearance of and being represented as the real kernel or vital germ, of which they are only the hard dead involucrum.

MISS LEYCESTER. For my part, the hypothesis seems to me as reasonably probable as any other that could be devised in a matter so recondite. Charles considers dogma-growth from the Protestant point of view as a decided retrogression; Catholics believe that every stage of such growth marks a real progress in the history of humanity. This theory occupies a middle position. Hence dogma-development becomes of itself neither retrogressive nor progressive. The seeming growth is but the temporary condition of things from which in due time new growth, or rather the old germ under new and favourable auspices, is destined to spring to maturity. Nor is it, notwithstanding Dr. Trevor's cautiously expressed objection, inapplicable to the ordinary advance of knowledge. It is surely no paradox to say, *e.g.* that modern astronomy was contained in ancient astrology, or modern chemistry in the old alchymy. The methods of research were largely alike; the chief differences were in the theories and starting-points, and in the objects contemplated.

TREVOR. Accepting your hypothesis, the kernel of modern astronomy is certainly an anomalous product to have issued from the nut of astrology. I suppose you would hardly contend that the Copernican system was really involved in the Ptolemaic?

MISS LEYCESTER. Perhaps not, but you have given the

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theory a more specific and narrow implication than I suspect it was intended to have. I should be far from saying that the rule was universal. As a general mode of scientific progress, I think it holds good. Nor, I think, would you deny that in its application to Christianity it is especially appropriate; for here the question is of a deposit of faith, a germ of moral and spiritual truth generally authoritative among men, and therefore not so likely to be changed by the antagonism of distinctly different veracities or principles that assume that name, as enveloped and hidden by them.

TREVOR. I should like to have some specific example of these preservative blessings of dogma.

HARRINGTON. Let me give you the one my friend suggested to me. 'Take,' he said, 'the controversies of the early Church on the Divinity of Christ. No doubt most liberal thinkers of our day, contrasting the enormous emphasis laid upon it by the post-Apostolic Fathers, the councils convened to define it, the persecutions employed to assert it, with the reticence of Christ on the subject, would think such a stress misplaced and exaggerated. But suppose the Arians had been successful, and the Nicene Creed had received corresponding modifications. The tendency to diminish the supremacy of Christ thus commenced, might have gone on till other and more serious stages of deterioration were reached, so that eventually the Church might have lost Christ, especially in the dark ages through which Christianity had to pass, as the centre of her system. Whereas by insisting on it from an early period, exalting it even to an unreasonable extent, she at least preserved it, until men of a freer mind, of more liberal culture, able to assimilate and equalize the essential features of Christ's teaching with other varied progress in science and philosophy, should be in a position to take the germ or kernel, and, throwing away the shells which have subserved their purpose, to adhere to that fractional part of Christianity in which all its real vitality consists.' My reply to this far-fetched hypothesis was, briefly, that it was to the literature of Christianity, not to its dogmatic development, that modern thinkers would appeal. So far as the dogma aided to preserve the literature in which

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was contained the first form of Christianity, so far only would the argument be valid. On the very question at issue, the teachings of Christ on His relations to God are more valuable than all the decrees of all the general councils on the same subject.

TREVOR. You might have suggested in addition the absurdity of supposing that sixteen centuries were needed to develop a germ which, in point of fact, came into existence in the completest maturity.

MISS LEYCESTER. But, Doctor, as you are aware, the germ might have been mature without its state of preparedness being shared by surrounding circumstances, and he might have answered your objection by pointing out other examples of the arrested vitality or slow growth of truth, and the many instances in which the germ of some scientific or philosophical discovery has lain dormant for centuries, awaiting the fulness of time when it was destined to find a congenial environment, and thereby a rapid and decisive development.

MRS. HARRINGTON. It does not seem to me that we have the requisite data for deciding what especial purpose, agreeably with the Divine government of the world, such an extreme expansion as is presented by some forms of Christian dogma was meant to subserve. For that matter, however, there are other episodes—retardations of growth, mysterious and prolonged stoppages of Time's great clock—in secular history as well, of which it is difficult to see the utility considered as bearing directly on the moral or intellectual progress of mankind.

ARUNDEL. One purpose of this luxuriant dogma-growth —I am far from thinking it the only one—may have been the consolidation of Christian nations and races, in times of political and social disorganization, by the principle of supreme and Divine authority, the only one which imperfectly civilized races are able to understand.

HARRINGTON. 'Until,' you should have added, 'the human reason, educated and enlightened, might be able to assume its own inherent functions of self-government, provisionally delegated to the guardianship of external authority'—precisely St. Paul's argument as to the providential

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purpose of the Jewish law, 'Now I say that the heir as long as he is a child differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.' Nevertheless, my friend, you must have a care lest in admitting the temporary nature of dogma you lay yourself open to the imputation of supposing that it is destined some day to total extinction, which I know cannot be your opinion.

ARUNDEL. Certainly not. It is of the overgrowth of dogma that I was speaking. That purely authoritative teachings and modes of communicating them should lose somewhat of their power in proportion to the progress of men in every department of thought and science appears to me so self-evident as to be almost a truism.

MISS LEYCESTER. I can understand the fascination which arbitrary uninquiring belief has for intellects of a weaker kind—'ivy-minds,' I have heard them called. To such persons dogmas are like the old Jewish cities of refuge, into which any man guilty, or fearing to be 'guilty of error unawares,' might escape. What I am not able to divine is how men of strong powerful intellects should allow themselves to be bound passively to the chariot wheels of authority, without the least preliminary examination of the origin and function of the chariot, the character of the charioteer, the direction in which it is being driven, or even the nature of the bands and ties which render them helpless participators in its movements.

TREVOR. For a detailed solution of your difficulty you must await our discussions. The motive-influences in every great mental movement are so various, and depend so completely on personal character and circumstances, that an epitome of them is impossible. Augustine will, *e.g.* give us an instance of the direct production of extreme dogmatism by means, (1) of a reaction against Free-thought; (2) imaginative and speculative power; (3) hierarchical ambition. But while in his and other cases we agree to deprecate and lament excessive dogma, we need not shut our eyes to obvious palliatives and excuses which may be urged, even by those who are aware of some of its dangers. Especially

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may be noted in every presentation of truth, the inevitable necessities of the case. You cannot eliminate the human factor in the problem. Truths of every kind, even when not originated by, must needs pass into and through, human intellects, which do not invariably act the part of spiritual filters; they must be exposed to human temptations and be expressed in human language, and therefore be liable to human fallibility and error.

HARRINGTON. Excuse me, Doctor, the consideration just mentioned is of too subtle and abstruse a character to be largely influential. Most men, so far from being kept back, are rather impelled by a sense of fallibility to embrace and exaggerate the merits of dogma. They take no account, as a rule, of possible defects in their own receptivity—for of course truth is received *ad modum recipientis*, just as sounds are heard or objects are seen.

MISS LEYCESTER. But why should men be always anxiously scrutinizing their conditions of perception or introspection, like a valetudinarian with his fingers for ever on his pulse? Should not intellection be just as unconsciously performed as any physical function of a sound and healthy organization? And, after all, no man can have any other mode of apprehending truth but what is innate and peculiar to himself. Such a fact ought, no doubt, to impart some modesty into his beliefs and methods of attaining them, but ordinarily it has the very opposite result.

TREVOR. I agree with you, but in my suggested palliatives for dogmatism I was regarding it from our own philosophic and candid standpoint. Human fallibility and its consciousness does really operate in two ways—1st, it drives men to dogmatism; 2nd, it impels them to Skepticism. But, as you say, the latter is really the logical result. Taking, *e.g.* ecclesiastical dogma, I know no better antidote to its excessive pretension than the secret history of the councils, emperors, empresses, and bishops who took part in them, such as we have in the ingenuous pages of Tillemont. The passion, lust, ambition, and self-interest which were frequently predisposing causes of the determinations and decisions of councils are perfectly appalling.

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HARRINGTON. I remember once making a remark on this very subject of the suspicious sources of dogma-growth, to a clerical but cynical friend. His reply will serve in part as an answer to Florence's wonderment that strong intellects are found to be passive recipients of dogma. He said: 'Provided a dogma does not absolutely shock common sense, provided it is not clearly out of all harmony and connection with other beliefs in the same category, I am willing to accept it. As to knowing precisely how it came to have the shape or formation it now presents (limiting, of course, the remark to human agencies, *i.e.* all the secret intrigues of courts, councils, bishops, &c.) why, thanks, I would much rather not. I like or can tolerate the finished article well enough, but I don't care to see the process of its manufacture. Similarly, if I want to relish my dinner, I would much rather not be in the kitchen while it is being prepared. The saucepan and gridiron may not be scrupulously scoured, the cook's hands or her apron may not be perfectly clean, or any one of the many requisite operations may not be effected with the extreme care and nicety that my fastidiousness would suggest. But when the meal is dressed and served I sit down with an appetite, not wholly ignorant that there may have been incidents in its production which, if I knew, would make me uncomfortable, but feeling happy in the consciousness of ignorance when knowledge might be painful and disquieting, and recognising as inevitable the human instrumentality and its shortcomings to which I owe not only this but numberless other dressings, meals, and preparations mental as well as physical.' . . . I ought to add that I consider his cynicism as merely the cloak of listlessness or idleness, for he was by no means deficient in intellectual power.

MISS LEYCESTER. Such a theological Epikourean richly deserved an occasional attack of severe mental dyspepsia in order to recall him to a sense of duty. I suppose it is of no use reminding men of that type of Locke's severe comments on their apathetic listlessness, or telling them that all truth unverified is in reality no truth at all—in the sense of personal possession.

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TREVOR. Not in the least. Their dogmatic appetites are large and their digestions good. But, though I agree with it, I may remind you that exceptions have been taken to the idea so strongly insisted on by Locke. In the case of wrong belief, Augustine, *e.g.* with a pardonable reminiscence of his past career, thought that there was a considerable difference between a heretic and a man who merely believed in heretics.[1] The heretic or heresiarch, he maintained, was the skilled leader who knew full well the meaning and object of his wrong teaching; whereas his disciple might be deceived by the illusion of the teacher's intellectual or other gifts. The former was bound to substantiate and verify; to his personal dependant this independent criticism was needless, or, at least, not necessarily obligatory.

HARRINGTON. A charitable distinction, truly, and worthy of a redoubtable dogmatist like Augustine, to whom, like others of his class, self-engendered misbelief, however honestly come by, is always criminal. Why might not the poor heresiarch plead the illusion and false glamour of his supposed wrong tenets, as well as his disciple urge his own personal influence? Ideas and theories are often far more attractive than persons, and exercise much greater influence. Besides, Augustine's intellect was too inherently powerful to permit him to become the blind follower of any system. Indeed, as a Manichæan his own personal influence seduced several of his friends. Considered therefore as an attempt at exculpation, his distinction reminds one of Juvenal's verse—

Quam temere in nosmet legem sancimus iniquam.

ARUNDEL. I don't see why you should press Augustine's distinction so hardly. It seems no more than the ordinary discrimination between the leaders of any great movement, whether religious or political, and the sequacious crowd which follows at their heels. Take the analogous case of a rebellion or treason: every government would think itself bound to treat its leaders with more severity than its followers.

TREVOR. No doubt. But your suggested analogy is

[1] *De Utilitate Credendi*, cap. i. *Om. op.* viii. p. 46.

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deceptive. Mental freedom, its limits and duties, are not, nay, cannot be, determined by the rough-and-ready considerations which obtain in political government. The pillars on which human society is placed must not be meddled with except for imperative reasons; but no such reasons of general danger from anarchy and disorganization obtain in the independent pursuit of truth, and the spiritual freedom resulting from such pursuit.

ARUNDEL. In other words, a heresiarch is not so dangerous as a political rebel—a questionable proposition, I apprehend, to many people. But suppose that the direct tendency of any theoretical or philosophical system should be the subversion of all constituted authority, might it not be right to suppress the movements, together with its leader, while in the theoretical bud, before it has time to develop into an open political organization?

TREVOR. Certainly not. You are, I suspect unconsciously, suggesting the mischievous fallacy adopted by tyrants and despots of every kind, and which has done more harm to human liberty than any other argument. Society can only take cognizance of this as of every other antagonistic element in some overt form or manifestation. In its 'theoretical bud' every movement is, or must be held to be, blameless, nor should any attempt be made to repress by physical means theories and ideas which are best counteracted by reasonings of an opposite kind. As a matter of history and experience, no theoretical principle or philosophical movement can in a healthy state of society, *i.e.* one in which liberty is most widely and equally distributed, 'operate injuriously.' . . . But our discussion is taking a political turn, so I will with your leave recall your attention to our subject by commencing my essay on the Skepticism of Augustine.

. . . . . .

Few names in Christian antiquity are better adapted to illustrate the relation of Free-thought to ecclesiastical dogma than that of Augustine. His life is a canvas on which are depicted in vivid colours the juxtaposition and varied antagonisms of Christianity and heathendom in the fourth century. In his character and

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intellectual career, as in his parentage and environment, he has a divided personality, representing the dualism of the age in which he lived. The son of a Pagan father and Christian mother, his whole life shares the heterogeneous character of its origin. At different periods of his career he is a Pagan philosopher and a Christian bishop, a thorough-going Skeptic and an ardent believer, a debauchee and a rigorous ascetic, a leader among Free-thinkers and the most despotic of dogmatists, a friend of heretics and their most ruthless adversary. All the main currents of thought and feeling which are found intermingled in an age of great mental upheaval and social commotion are found reflected in his life. This is, no doubt, a proof of the greatness and capacity of his nature. A great picture presupposes a large canvas. Indeed, one main distinction between really great men and those of ordinary stature is found in the fact that the first will, nay must, by tendencies they cannot control, mirror the age in which they live. Their mental activities are faithful, automatic, self-registering reflections of the religious, political, or other waves of human energy which pass by and through them, and they are therefore indissolubly part and parcel of their time; whereas the life of the ordinary man may be shifted a century or two backwards or forwards without much damage to its integrity or identity. Augustine's is a mind of this full and comprehensive order. Like an inland sea which drains all the watercourses of the surrounding neighbourhood, from the broad permanent river to the insignificant and temporary mountain torrent, its receptivity is limited only by the number and contents of its various confluents. This aspect of Augustine's intellect is clearly expressed in his works. Few are the currents of speculation whether Pagan or Christian, few the religious emotions, few the ideas and opinions in regard to theology and kindred subjects, which are not found in that voluminous treasury of ancient Christian thought. Fénelon said that a judiciously selected collection of the metaphysical truths scattered with lavish but careless hand throughout Augustine's works would be much superior to Descartes' 'Meditations.'[1] Leaving out of consideration Fénelon's comparison and the restriction of his remark to metaphysics, we may certainly admit that no Christian teacher, ancient or modern, could furnish such a number of remarks, pregnant and pithy, subtle and profound, on most subjects of human speculation, as might be gathered from Augustine's works. Nor is their value limited to the age when they were written, to

[1] Fénelon, *Lettres sur divers sujets de Métaphysique*, &c. Lettre iv.

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which indeed they stand in the relation of a veritable encyclopædia. It is a proof of the reach and expansiveness of his intellect, that many, perhaps most, of his observations have a real and permanent value. The theologian, the metaphysician, the Pietist, the mystic, the historian, the ethical student, &c. may even now find many a priceless 'excerpt' bearing on his own specialty, by digging in these extensive quarries of ecclesiastical lore. This many-sidedness must be ascribed to the very fact of the incongruities in his career, that, *e.g.* he was a philosopher as well as a divine. Indeed, the dualism of a life almost equally divided between Free-thought and dogmatism is reflected in his works: they betray the instinctive liberty, impatience of restraint, the depth and audacity of speculation which pertain to the genuine Skeptic, curiously interblended with the arbitrary, overweening spirit of the ecclesiastical dogmatist.

Augustine was born at Tagasta, a small town of Numidia, in the year 353.[1] His father, Patricius, was a Decurio—a magisterial office in a Roman colony of some little importance—and was also a member of the town council of Tagasta. As I have remarked, he was also a Pagan, having received Christian baptism only a short time before his death. Augustine's mother, Monica, is a well-known and illustrious type of Christian virtue and devotion, albeit her piety is not untinctured by superstition. His early youth Augustine narrates in his 'Confessions' with an exuberance of candour and a stress on his shortcomings which is probably owing in some measure to his subsequent prepossession in respect of original sin. The general corruption of manners among the Christian communities of Africa—for Augustine's case was not peculiar—was no doubt fostered by the customary delay of baptism until the fermentation of youth had somewhat subsided. Youthful misdemeanours, even of a great kind, were extenuated by the plea —certainly ill-sounding in the mouth of a Christian parent—'Let them alone, they have not yet been baptized.'[2] Of this liberty Augustine seems to have taken the fullest advantage. Left to his own devices, his greatest delight was seeing spectacles, plays, and whatever appealed most strongly to his imagination. He also displayed at an early age no small amount of waywardness and impatience of restraint, which prognosticated at once both the Free-thought of the earlier and the dogmatic rigour of the later portion of his life. But Augustine's youthful excesses did not

[1] On the year of Augustine's birth, cf. Bindemann, vol. i. p. 1, note.

[2] *Confessions*, p. 10. Cf. Flottes, *Études*, p. 8.

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veil from his father's careful eye the promise of future greatness. Patricius designed him for a rhetor, as the profession in which his vivacity of character, his ardent imagination, and an excellent memory gave the greatest promise of success.

Having exhausted the educational resources of his immediate neighbourhood, Augustine repaired, at the age of seventeen, to Carthage to complete his studies. Unluckily, his father, who had watched over his education with the greatest solicitude, died about this time, and the further cost of his training was borne by Romianus, a wealthy nobleman of Tagasta, and a distant relative. Into the various dissipations which made Carthage notorious, even amidst the corruption then generally prevalent in every part of the Roman Empire,[1] the young student plunged, with all the recklessness of his nature. An illicit intercourse with a female of that place[2] resulted in the birth of a son, on whom Augustine, with a characteristic conviction that even his animal passions were in some sort the objects of Divine guidance, bestowed the name of Adeodatus. Meanwhile, notwithstanding youthful vices, his

[1] Flottes, *Études*, p. 13. Comp. Salviani, *De Gubernatione Dei*, lib. vii.; *Bibliotheca Maxima Vet. Patr.* vol. viii. p. 368; and Ampère, *Hist. Lit. de la France*, ii. pp. 172, 173, &c. In a work on Christian Free-thought it may be worth notice, in passing, that Salvian, a contemporary of Augustine and Athanasius, is disposed to tolerate the Arianism of the barbarians, on account of the superiority of their morals to those of the orthodox. Addressing the Romans, he says, 'You think you are better than the barbarians. They are heretics, say you, and you are orthodox, hence you are superior as to doctrine; but as to practice, I am sorry for it, you are worse, for you know the law and you violate it. . . . They (the barbarians) are heretics, but they know it not. They are so to us, but to themselves they are not so. They think themselves Catholics; so much so, indeed, that they accuse us of heresy. The truth is with us, but they think they possess it; they are wrong, but their intention is right.'—Ampère, *Hist. Lit.* loc. cit.

[2] Augustine's biographers pass *sicco pede* over these early escapades in the life of their hero. The Abbé Flottes, *e.g.* gravely comments: 'Il était alors absorbé par le besoin d'aimer et d'être aimé; *mais il ne savait point se renfermer dans les bornes que prescrit l'union chaste et lumineuse des esprits*' (*Études*, p. 10). It is a striking illustration of the laxity in the relation of the sexes among the Christians of the fourth century that neither Augustine nor his mother once seems to have thought of an early marriage as the only Christian preventive of such immorality; indeed, his parents were opposed to a scheme which might have thwarted their ambitious projects on behalf of their son (cf. Flottes, p. 9). Even when Augustine came to contemplate marriage, just before his baptism, it was merely with the intention of mending his fortunes. As for the saintly Monica, she seems to have dreaded a *mésalliance* for her son as much as a modern fashionable mother would have done.

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education was progressing. His favourite studies were narratives that appealed to the imagination, or which inflamed his easily excitable passions. Virgil was the author who seems to have taken the greatest hold on his young mind.

The turning-point of Augustine's intellectual career was the reading of 'Hortensius,' a lost work of Cicero's, having for its subject an exhortation to the study of philosophy. The rhetorical style of this work, its flowing language, its lofty spirit, the single-hearted devotion to wisdom for its own sake, exercised a marvellous fascination on the young student. The results thus produced in diverting his thoughts into new and purer channels, and kindling a pure and ardent thirst for knowledge, appeared to him in after-life as a first step to Christianity, although the remark [1] that his ardour for the work was cooled by its containing no mention of the name of Christ savours rather of the Christian bishop who wrote the 'Confessions' than of the young Pagan in doctrine and morals which Augustine really was at that time. Cicero's 'Hortensius,' moreover, impelled him to search for truth as an independent thinker apart from schools of philosophy or doctrinal systems of any kind, and for this reason may be regarded as the starting-point of the Free-speculation which, commencing at his nineteenth year, continued up to his baptism, when he was thirty-three years old. Following this philosophical conversion as an effect of the spiritual forces it engendered, Augustine was induced to examine for himself, apparently for the first time, the contents of Holy Scripture.[2] The result was unsatisfactory, the young rhetor being repelled by its plain, unornate style. 'He disdained its simplicity, while its internal meaning escaped his understanding. Once really quickened, Augustine's powerful and inquisitive intellect, guided by the fervid imagination which was always the dominating principle of his energies, made rapid progress. He studied Aristotle's Categories, and extended his researches to other branches of what was then regarded as a liberal education. The facility with which he acquired these sciences, and the ease and readiness with which he learnt to impart them to others, served to confirm the vanity and ambition which formed a part of his natural character, and which even Christianity, so far from extirpating, merely transmuted into another form and directed into new channels. At this particular stage of his mental progress, Augustine is therefore the earnest inquirer into, and the eager recipient of, Gentile wisdom. But in slaking his thirst for know-

[1] *Conf.* p. 30.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 31.

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ledge at this great fount of enormously diversified contents, it is not wonderful to find that he imbibed somewhat of Gentile folly and superstition. He was now and for some years subsequently a firm believer in judicial astrology and other methods of divination, which he occasionally seems to have practised on his own behalf.[1] There was, indeed, a strong vein of superstition in Augustine's character which never altogether abandoned him. We learn from his 'Confessions' that two of his friends endeavoured to dissuade him from his belief in divination but without success. The saintly Monica followed the course of her gifted but headstrong son with bitter tears, but neither now, still less at any former time, could she have had the least control over him. Indeed, he admits that he was impatient and ashamed of being ruled by a woman. Nevertheless the fruit of his philosophical conversion, the impulse he had received from Cicero's 'Hortensius,' remained. Its eloquent exhortation to pursue philosophy, not only as a scholarly acquisition but as the highest aim of human life, struck a responsive chord in Augustine's breast. Still the voice of the Roman orator was no more than the plaintive cry of a fellow-wanderer in the broad plains of philosophy. Truth and wisdom were duly exalted, but Cicero as an Academic Skeptic could have had no pretence of having discovered them. Their pursuit was enjoined, but without the promise of definitive attainment. Augustine was compelled to search for himself, and the effort, while indispensable to true intellectual independence, entailed some years' wandering among various schemes of thought of a more or less promising character.

Manichæanism presented itself to him as a philosophic and religious theory which claimed to have discovered, and consequently to be able to teach men the truth. The purport of this curious form of belief was, apparently, to reconcile in some sort all the great Oriental beliefs. It was a heterogeneous compound of Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity. With the first it shared an elaborate system of continuous and perpetual emanations, and a practice of self-denial and asceticism. With the second it inculcated a dualism that divided the physical and moral universe into two antagonistic sovereignties. While as to Christianity, it spiritualized the material forms of some of its prominent doctrines, and endeavoured to reduce it to a kind of Oriental mysticism. Even a summary of the contents of this complicated and at that time widely diffused faith would be far beyond the scope of our present inquiry. In its relation to Augustine we can only con-

[1] *Contr. Academ.* i. chap. vi. *Confess.* p. 46.

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sider it as Dr. Bindemann suggests, in the specific form in which his own works present it. Even with this restriction, we can readily comprehend the varied attractions it offered to the speculative, eager, truth-searching intellect of Augustine. The subject is indeed one into which he enters fully in several of his works,[1] so that there can be no question as to the motives which induced him to become a Manichæan. First among its fascinations he himself ranks its perpetual appeals to truth, as the simple disinterested object of its research.[2] With all its undoubted absurdities, it professed to be rationalistic: it taught that faith must follow and be guided by reason; that truth must be discussed and disentangled ('nisi prius discussa et enodata veritate'[3]) before it could claim the allegiance of its followers. On the other hand, Manichæans reproached Christianity with requiring a dogmatic faith based only on authority, and leaving no room for the free-play of the intellect. It was inevitable, as Augustine himself observed,[4] that a system professedly so free and unbiassed, so fair and reasonable, so absolutely disinterested, should have attracted a young and ardent Free-thinker like himself. In after-years he compared the Manichæans to cunning birdcatchers laying their limed twigs close to water in order to entrap thirsty birds.[5] The bait of 'reason' and 'wisdom' he found irresistible. Nor was he alone in yielding to their allurements; indeed, he was only one of many less known and illustrious instances of the seductive power of Manichæanism. Some of his personal friends, however, seem to have been drawn to the new system less by its own inherent merits than by the influence of his teaching and example. Besides the magnetic force of a professed adherence and devotion to truth, other motives of more or less power combined to render peculiarly adhesive the bird-lime that obstructed the free motion of our 'thirsty bird.' For some time he had held the opinion that the form of God was corporeal, and Manichæanism supplied both a basis and sanction to that opinion. Moreover, in the distinct repugnance to Christianity which the

[1] See, *e.g. Conf.* p. 32; *De Utilitate Credendi, Op.* viii. p. 46, &c. See also his various controversial treatises on Manichæanism.

[2] *Confess.* p. 32: 'et dicebant: veritas et veritas et multum eam dicebant mihi.' Cf. *De Mor. Manich.* c. 17: 'Magni pollicitatores rationis atque veritatis.'

[3] *De Utilitate Credendi*, cap. i. *Om. op.* viii. p. 46. Cf. Bindemann, i. pp. 92, 93.

[4] 'Quis non his pollicitationibus illiceretur, præsertim adolescentis animus cupidus veri?' *De Util. Cred.* c. i. *Om. op.* viii. col. 46.

[5] *De Util. Cred., Om. op.* viii. col. 47.

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impartial critic must assign to Augustine at this time—notwithstanding the affection for the name of Christ which he claimed to have imbibed with his mother's milk, and which may be classed among the 'after-thoughts' of the 'Confessions'—the negative criticism which Manichæanism brought to bear on historical Christianity no doubt recommended it to the young rhetor and teacher of logic. Nor are there wanting other and still profounder bonds of sympathy; the dualism and, speaking generally, the syncretistic aspects of Manichæan speculation commended it to a Skeptical, many-sided intellect like Augustine's, besides affording a ready solution of such problems as the nature of evil. The Pantheistic view of nature it inculcated tended to satisfy his aspiration for a faith which should include and form part of the natural laws and phenomena of the world, instead of standing aloof from them. The craving after redemption and inward peace, so distinctly but fancifully impressed even on the wildest vagaries of Manichæanism, appealed to the emotional elements in Augustine's character, and possibly tended to confirm his incipient conviction of the unsatisfying nature of mere sensuous enjoyments. Even his opposition to Holy Scripture, though based on its rhetorical deficiencies, corresponded with the polemical attitude Manichæanism had always maintained towards it, especially to the Old Testament. With all these philosophical and spiritual affinities, we are in a position to understand Augustine's nine years' application to this system. It was not in itself Skepticism, for some at least of its many doctrines were insisted on with a despotic vehemence never exceeded by any form of belief; but it was a very efficient preparatory course for the future Academic philosopher. Indeed, its educational value, irrespective of any development it was likely to attain, must have been very considerable for a man of Augustine's intellect and temperament. Its eclecticism and enormous amplitude of range were suited to a Free-thinker; its multifarious contents were adapted to an eager omnivorous intellect, as well as to a powerful imagination; while its many inconsistencies, both inherent and extrinsic, formed a perpetual exercise for the young dialectician, and incidentally gave promise of future deliverance from its toils. Nor again would it be impossible to find in Manichæanism aspects of a harsher tendency—a stress upon authority, a leaning towards hierarchical pretension, a jealousy and exclusiveness as regards other creeds—which might be held to adumbrate Augustine's last stage of evolution, and his final resting-place in the Christian Church.

But leaving speculation for fact, it is certain that from his

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nineteenth to his twenty-eighth year Augustine was an earnest and sedulous, if not enthusiastic, disciple of Manichæanism. During this period he changed his abode, perhaps more than once, from Tagasta to Carthage, though he finally settled down for some years at the latter city. His employment was that for which his father destined him—he was a teacher of rhetoric and logic, a disputant in the public schools, an occasional writer of odes and poems for the theatre—in kind, a short of cross between an ancient philosopher and a modern *littérateur*. His success in these various occupations was indisputable, and was rightly regarded by him as typifying the eminence he was ultimately destined to attain, though he could hardly then have prognosticated the specific ground on which his future celebrity was destined to rest. His attachment to Manichæanism, however, though lasting so many years, could at no time have borne the character of unqualified adherence, for it is important to note that he never became one of 'the elect,' *i.e.* the highest esoteric circle of Manichæanism, but was content with a place in the outer court of 'hearers' (*auditores*). We might readily infer on *a priori* grounds that the reason of this arrested Manichæan development must have been personal. The members of an ambitious proselytizing sect would only have been too glad to number among their leaders a man of Augustine's eminence and character, and this opinion is borne out by numberless passages in his works, in which he dwells on the defects and inconsistencies of the system, which prevented his full concurrence with, and finally determined his abandonment of it.[1] In the first place, Manichæanism had promised to its young adherent 'truth'—not as an object of search, but of actual realization. For a time he probably regarded this promise as fulfilled. 'Truth,' as the reasonable and only possible solution of the great problems of the world, the nature of God, His providential dealings with man, the mutual relation and inter-dependence of different portions of the universe, both physical and spiritual, Manichæanism claimed to have discovered. It boasted to be the sole Oidipous of the riddle, the only conceivable disentanglement of the complicated web. To each of its disciples it imparted a master key, which it said could turn all the great, and as yet unopened, locks of the universe. Augustine took the

[1] Cf. *e.g. Confessions*, pp. 34, 35, and see *passim* the books *contra Faustum* (*Op. om.* viii. 183–470), and the treatises *De Moribus Manichæorum* (*Op.* i. 715–43), *Contra Epistolam Manichæi* (viii. 151–82). Comp. on the various influences which finally separated Augustine from Manichæanism, Bindemann, i. 132–43; and Beausobre's *Histoire*, liv. ix.

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key thus put into his hands, and in process of time submitted it to a rigorous examination. He fitted it into the several locks it was said to open, but found that it failed in his hands to do its office. Partly opening some, it absolutely refused to move the wards of others—in short, the 'truth' of Manichæanism he discovered to be either incomplete or else altogether deceptive. Like the mirage of the desert, it attracted the traveller by its distant promise, only to disappoint him on a nearer approach. Another main cause of Augustine's dissatisfaction with Manichæanism was the discovery that its negative dialectics and its aggressive attitude to other systems, which at first had so delighted his keen critical intellect, were much more potent and successful than the arguments it could adduce in its own support. He then learnt what was evidently a well-acquired lesson of his life, and which afterwards stimulated his energy in the cause of dogma—how much easier destruction was than construction. He was also impressed, as he tells us, by the inconsistency between the profession and practice of 'elect' Manichæans, the claims of those persons to a peculiar sanctity of life being by no means borne out by their actual conduct. Not that Augustine's own life was immaculate, but greater liberty was conceded to him as being only a 'hearer,' just as the unbaptized among Christians were permitted greater licence than was allowed to those who were baptized. A potent influence in his gradual severance from Manichæanism must also be ascribed to a general increase of knowledge. Augustine's was eminently a progressive and expansive intellect, full of curiosity on all subject-matters of learning, and of ardour in their pursuit. His Manichæan period, varying as it does between his twentieth and thirtieth years, included the most inquisitive and acquisitive portions of his life. Then was pursued those extra theological studies which take up such a considerable portion of his works. Besides professional exercitations in grammar, logic, and rhetoric, he continued the cultivation of all other branches of contemporary science. He studied mathematics, and wrote treatises on such subjects as music, beauty, geometry, and arithmetic, &c., most of which are now lost. But foremost among favourite studies at this time was the reading of the Greek philosophers, and especially of Plato. Here he became acquainted, probably for the first time, with the Sokratic elenchus—an instrument which proved as effective in his own case as in that of so many other Skeptics.[1] His first application of it was to the Manichæan system and its

[1] Comp. Hüber, *Philosophie der Kirchenväter*, p. 238.

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boasted possession of 'truth.' Its success in overthrowing that motley edifice of rationalism, theosophy, and superstition, and liberating him from bondage,[1] suggested to Augustine the high value he ever afterwards entertained of the Sokratic method. We here arrive at what we must regard as the turning-point of Augustine's life. His study of Plato is the initiatory stage of his Skepticism, the real but invisible line of demarcation that separates the Manichæan from the Academic philosopher. Hence although Augustine's complete severance from the former creed did not take place until some years later, the hold it had gained on his convictions began from this time gradually to relax. But Plato was only the chief among other Greek and Roman thinkers to whom Augustine's attention was thus directed. His profession of regret that he failed to discover Christ in these philosophers may not unfairly be taken as the *arrière pensée* of a Christian bishop who, although trained on Gentile literature, and owing no small part of his culture, fame, and ability to its teaching, ungratefully affected to despise it at the close of his career. At least, if he felt some slight regard for the hallowed name he heard so often from his mother, it could only have been at this time of a superficial kind. Augustine's investigations into the profundities of Plato[2] and thinkers of similar idealistic tendencies served also to nourish and expand his imaginative powers. Hence by degrees his conception of God as body gave way to a more spiritual idea, and his first acquiescence in Manichæan dualism as the readiest mode of accounting for the existence of evil in the world was succeeded by a profounder estimate of the true relation of moral causes and effects. Reasons of smaller import and of a more personal character may also have contributed in some slight degree to complete Augustine's divorce from the first definite system of thought he had embraced. The death, *e.g.* of a much-loved friend, who in his last moments had abjured Manichæanism and embraced Christianity, profoundly affected a mind peculiarly open to such influences.[3] Perhaps also the repeated exhortations of his mother were not altogether without effect on his final determination.

Acted upon by so many causes, intellectual, religious, and personal, Augustine, by slow and imperceptible stages, arrived at the

[1] *Confess.* lib. v. cap. 14.

[2] On Augustine's indebtedness to Plato see Dr. von Stein's *Sieben Bücher zur Geschichte des Platonismus*, vol. iii. pp. 57–62.

[3] *Confess.* pp. 49, 50.

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full conviction not only of the inadequacy of Manichæanism to satisfy his own mental and spiritual needs, but of its inherently corrupt and debasing tendency. No doubt there were points in the system both immoral and misleading, but there were other elements in it of a wholesome if not truthful character. Certainly as a form of belief peculiarly suited to the Oriental imagination, and in communion with which many thousands had lived pure and on the whole useful lives, it deserved more respect than Augustine towards the close of his life was inclined to pay it. But he is but one example of many of the ingratitude of thinkers towards systems and creeds which possess only a transitory or propædeutic interest for themselves. Such persons might reflect on the maxim, 'Not to speak ill of the bridge that has carried them over.' There are few systems of thought that, earnestly pursued, are utterly devoid of all merit or utility. We may say of such philosophers what George Herbert said of preachers—

The worst speak something good.

In Augustine's case, it is at least easy to discern the educational advantages he derived from his long connection with Manichæanism. Its very weaknesses and inconsistencies, and the obvious necessity of verification, fostered and confirmed his intellectual independence; while its eclecticism and endeavour to amalgamate conflicting systems of thought imparted a width and comprehension to his mental outlook which a narrower and more uniform system could hardly have effected.

But before finally breaking with a faith he had nevertheless long outgrown, Augustine determined to give Manichæanism one more chance. Hitherto it had been to him an impersonal creed. True, many of his friends were Manichæans, but the belief had not been specifically authenticated to his warm and sympathetic nature by association with a teacher to whom he could look up with reverence and affection. This opportunity was now afforded him. The leading spirit among the Manichæans of that time was a certain Bishop Faustus of Mileve, whose acquaintance Augustine had long been desirous of making.[1] At last he happened to arrive at Carthage, and our Skeptic immediately sought an interview. He had accumulated, as it seems, a considerable stock of doubts, dilemmas, and inquiries, not only on the subject of Manichæanism but on many points of general knowledge. On all these he ex-

[1] *Confess.* lib. vii. c. 11: 'Cras inveniam, ecce manifestum adparebit et tenebo; ecce Faustus veniet et exponet omnia.'

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pected as he reasonably might from the chief leader of a religious system that claimed to be founded by an incarnation of the Holy Ghost, and to have discovered truth, something like an adequate solution. Especially did he desiderate further light as to astronomical and other phenomena of the universe on which Manichæanism largely theorized. Unhappily he was doomed to disappointment. Not that Faustus was at all wanting in learning, ingenuity, and eloquence; on the contrary, he pre-eminently shone in these qualifications. Never before had Augustine heard the doctrines of Manichæanism presented in such a plausible and attractive guise. Still, though charmed as a rhetor with the graces of his manner and discourse, as an earnest searcher for truth he desired something more than eloquent phrases and well-arranged propositions.[1] Accordingly he opened his Skeptical budget. He asked Faustus for an explanation of the solstices, the equinoxes, eclipses, and other points of general information on which his inquiring intellect had exercised itself. To his surprise as well as gratification, Faustus candidly pleaded his entire ignorance. Sokrates himself could not have been more ingenuous or more earnest in disclaiming knowledge.[2] The admission was honourable to Faustus as a man, besides harmonizing with Augustine's Skeptical proclivities, but it was scarcely calculated to restore his vacillating faith in the creed of which the bishop was the acknowledged oracle.[3]

Augustine's interviews with Bishop Faustus form the last scene in what we may term the 'Manichæan act' of his intellectual life-drama. They were also a *lever de rideau* for the first scene in the next act. The avowed nescience of the Manichæan leader coincided with and confirmed the results of his own Skeptical studies in Plato, Cicero, and other Gentile thinkers. To Augustine it must have seemed that a wonderful unanimity as to the impossibility of knowledge pervaded systems of thought so different in origin and general purport. Was then truth altogether unattainable? It certainly appeared to be so. Manichæanism, with its arrogant boast of that attainment, had evidently lied. Augustine's opinion of his quondam friends might have been expressed by the lines:

> And be these juggling fiends no more believed
> That palter with us in a double sense;
> That keep the word of promise to our ear,
> And break it to our hope.

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[1] *Confess.* p. 68. [2] *Confess.* p. 69.
[3] Comp. Flottes, *Études*, pp. 40, 41.

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Whither could he go next? To what philosophy or religious creed could he appeal? For the time our truth-searcher is disheartened. He tells us that although he had determined to abjure his old faith, nothing better presented itself for his acceptance.[1]

While in this frame of mind, Augustine determined to leave Carthage and take up his residence at Rome. His resolution gave great pain to his mother, who employed every means of dissuading him from his purpose, but in vain. Indeed, he cannot be absolved from needless harshness and cruelty in the manner in which he carried out his project.[2] Soon after his arrival at Rome, where he took up his abode with a Manichæan, he was seized with a violent fever. For some time his life was despaired of, but with the help of a constitution unusually robust he was able gradually to throw it off. His attitude to Christianity at this time is incidentally marked by his not only refusing Christian baptism, which some friend had probably suggested, but by ridiculing it as a heavenly medicine. He still associated with his former coreligionists, both 'auditors' and 'elect,' though he had really quite renounced their creed. As soon as he had recovered his health and made the requisite arrangements, he established a school for instruction in rhetoric, which, however, brought him in more fame than pecuniary profit. But what was of more importance to his mental future was the self-analysis and criticism he underwent at this time, and which was suggested by his hostile relation to Manichæanism, Christianity,[3] and every other system of positive truth. This introspection and its results he thus describes: 'Reflecting often so far as my capacity permitted on the human mind, so vivacious, so penetrating, and so keen, I did not conceive truth unattainable, except for the reason that we are ignorant of the mode of acquiring it, and that this method should be suggested by some Divine authority. It remained to ask what this authority was, because of so many conflicting systems each professed to possess it. Hence I found myself in an inextricable labyrinth, which I was very reluctant to penetrate, but into which my mind, restlessly stirred by the desire of finding truth, impelled me.'[4] Such is Augustine's own account of the motives that induced him to embrace Academic Skepticism. In the 'Confessions' he passes over this episode in his life somewhat lightly, and yet it included, so far as mental movements insensibly commenced and as gradually ceasing can be determined by distinct measurements of time,

[1] *Confess.* p. 75. [2] *Confess.* pp. 71, 72. [3] Cf. *Confess.* p. 76.
[4] *De Util. Credendi, Op. om.* viii. col. 57.

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some five years of his life. But this may be explained by the fact that the 'Confessions' are written from the standpoint of the Bishop of Hippo; and if they are careful to record deviations from morality while they are inclined to be reticent on extreme aberrations from orthodoxy, this is only consistent with the dogmatic error which attributes to the latter greater criminal guilt than to the former.[1]

We have thus traced Augustine's life to its avowedly Skeptical period. Truth is now to him, as to other Academics, not a realized possession so much as a hidden object of search. We have no record of the precise extent to which Augustine carried his Skeptical uncertainty. That it was in any respect complete, that it resulted in the sheer vacuity which it was the aim of Pyrrhonic, and perhaps also of Academic,[2] Skepticism to establish, may be unequivocally denied. His intellectual organization absolutely forbade the possibility of doubt on such fundamental points as the Being of God,[3] the real existence of truth, the impossibility of waiving or transcending the ultimate facts of consciousness. Hence it might easily have been foreseen that however much Academic Skepticism administered to certain needs in Augustine's nature, however much it subserved him in his present necessity, whatever basis it furnished for freedom of research, whatever hope it held out to a sanguine thinker like himself of a final attainment of truth, however close the contact it established between himself and some of the greatest thinkers of Greece and Rome, it was hopelessly inadequate as a full satisfaction of his mental and spiritual cravings. A state not only of contented suspense, but even of long-deferred fruition, was abhorrent to his nature. Truth, real, objective, impregnable, he must acquire, not as a contingency of the future, but as an actual present possession. To attain this blissful consummation no cost was too great, no sacrifice too

[1] Augustine's after-opinion of the criminality of doubt is thus stated in his *De Civ. Dei*, lib. xix. c. 18: 'Omnino civitas Dei talem dubitationem tanquam dementiam detestatur, habens de rebus quas mente atque ratione comprehendit, etiamsi parvam, "propter corpus corruptibile quod aggravat animam" (quoniam, sicut dicit Apostolus "ex parte scimus"), tamen *certissimam scientiam*.' What renders doubt thus criminal is the fact that it may be overcome and destroyed. 'Ignorantiæ malum non tantum minui sed et *consumi potest in hac vita*,' *Op.* x. 689. Whence it would seem that Augustine, towards the end of his life, came to regard doubt and ignorance as purely volitional!

[2] See, on Academic Skepticism, the remarks in vol. i. Evening iv. pp. 302–321, and comp. Bindemann, i. 186, &c.

[3] Cf. *Confess.* p. 89.

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impossible. It was by the promise of this definitive possession that Manichæanism had been able to entrap him. Finding himself deceived, he tried to discover a substitute in the probabilities and perpetual truth-search of the Academics. In reality it was only a *promise* of water to a man not only thirsty but determined at any risk to quench his thirst. I cannot say that I regard such an intellect, with its passionate and indomitable cravings, as the highest in its own nature or as the best adapted for the pursuit of truth in a world constituted like our own. There is little in the laws and phenomena of the universe which suggests impatience as an useful implement in their discovery and interpretation, nor can it be said to be a fact impressed on human history that he who is determined to realize truth within any given period must inevitably succeed. What is, however, certain is that intellects of this ardent type will find what they *conceive* to be truth, and will insist on it with a profession of infallibility which will render them dogmatists of the most rigorous kind.

We have Augustine's own reminiscences of this Skeptical period in his books against the Academics.[1] Indeed, his polemical writings against once-cherished beliefs are invaluable for elucidating the different stages of his mental development. Although written from a hostile point of view, we can nevertheless discern, by the form of and stress upon certain arguments, the measure of their hold upon himself; just as in the demolition of a building we can, by examining plan and materials, form an accurate idea of its state before it was destroyed. I think, therefore, this may be a suitable place to examine very briefly his treatise against the Academics. We must, however, bear in mind that the work was written some few years after the time to which our sketch of his life has brought us, and that it is a post-mortem examination, the dissection of a faith which has become dead to the operator, though some of its once-living tissues still possess enough vitality to quiver under his scalpel.

In form the treatise is clearly suggested by the philosophical dialogues of Cicero, its main distinction from the Academics of that writer consisting in the object of the argument and the tone in which it is discussed. A free debate on the merits and defects of the Academic philosophy is supposed to be carried on by the pupils and friends of Augustine, he himself acting the part of

[1] Augustine's books against the Academics have been analyzed by Poujoulat, *Histoire de St. Augustin*, i. pp. 45–57, and much better and more fully by Bindemann, i. pp. 295–309.

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moderator and referee. The issue first propounded is whether the discovery of truth is necessary to a happy life, or whether its investigation suffices to attain that object. So proposed, the question at once suggests definitions. What, *e.g.* is the meaning of a happy life? To some of the speakers it seems that the mere search after truth constitutes happiness. To this it is answered that the happiest life requires the employment of man's noblest functions, the gratification of his highest needs. Hence the perfect life must consist in the possession of wisdom as a *sine quâ non* of happiness. But no man who is still searching can be said to have attained to that spiritual perfection. The defenders of the Academy then appeal to Cicero as a wise man who had enjoyed a happy life, and yet had taught that truth could not be comprehended by man, and that every wise man must without bias or prepossession content himself with its pursuit, and in that pursuit must learn to find his happiness. Upon this the anti-Skeptics retort that search implies privation and imperfection, and he who cannot, or at least does not, attain the object of his quest does not deserve the name of happy. Whereupon it is urged that the intellectual perfection of man consists, at least during his earthly life, in seeking, not in possessing, truth; the full knowledge of truth being a distinctive attribute of God, and perhaps also of human souls set free from the body. On earth, therefore, man attains in sincere effort after truth his highest destiny and happiness. This is evident if we ask the question whether we could dare to call the man who nobly pursues truth unhappy. For every man, we may suppose, is either happy or unhappy. This conclusion is moreover expressed by the definition of a happy life, as that most consonant with reason, for certainly no man could live more rationally than the perpetual seeker after truth. The Dogmatists reply to this: The man who is in error can be said to live neither reasonably nor happily. Now he who is always searching and never finding must be in error, whence it follows, either that the erring may be happy, or that he who perpetually searches and never finds does not err. The Skeptic advocate answers that search is so far from being error that it is the best, nay, the only precaution against error, which on the contrary implies positive and definitive tenets. As the combatants seem here to need a satisfactory definition of error, Augustine interposes by suggesting a delay in order to obtain one. The Academic then proposes to define error as 'the regard for the false instead of the true.' His opponent demands whether he will not admit that 'the truth is the straight path of life,' on which the Skeptic exclaims that his ideal wise man follows this straight road.

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The anti-Skeptic amends his definition: 'Wisdom is,' he says, 'the straight road that leads to truth.' Whereupon his adversary triumphantly asks, 'What road is so fitted to lead to truth as the earnest pursuit of truth?'

Again there occurs a difficulty. Wisdom must have its definition. Augustine is appealed to for the purpose. He suggests one which men of ancient times had proposed, viz. Wisdom is the knowledge of human and Divine things. The suggestion was clearly in favour of the Dogmatist. The Skeptic replies by requiring a particular example of this definition; he points to the case of a certain Albicerius, a diviner, and asks whether he would not be regarded as a knower of human and Divine things. The anti-Skeptic demurs to the reply, both on special and on general grounds; he suggests another definition of wisdom, *i.e.* the knowledge of these Divine and human things which relate to a happy life. But the Skeptic objects that this definition is too narrow. Every effort and endeavour for knowledge is, he insists, a source of happiness. God alone possesses knowledge, and has appointed the search for it as the earthly destiny of humanity. The anti-Skeptic then expresses his surprise that the wise should be thus allowed to toil in vain, but is met with the exclamation, 'How, in vain! when he labours for such a reward?' for it is because he seeks that he is wise, and so far as he is wise is he happy. While, therefore, a man keeps his mind as much as possible free from all restrictions of the body, he is not distracted by vain desires, but directs his calm gaze upon God and his own inner being, so that enjoying in this world the free unimpeded exercise of his faculties, he is destined in the next to the full fruition of his efforts. Augustine here interposes with the remark that he would have concluded the discussion before, but he wished to let his young friends exercise freely their faculties for philosophical argument. He suggests as a compromise that both the possession of truth and also its search are needed to constitute human happiness in its totality. The discussion thereupon terminates for the time.

On a subsequent occasion it is resumed, when, after some remarks on the relation between the Old and the New Academy, and the special antagonism of the latter to the Stoics, it enters upon another phase, viz. Is it not absurd to assert the unknowableness of truth, and yet to lay stress on the 'probable' as the rule of life? for the proposition that anything resembles truth which is the meaning of probable presupposes the existence of truth itself, and also the fact of a certain recognition of it on our own parts. Augustine himself is now the opponent of the

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Academics, and his friend Alypius their lukewarm defender. Hence this portion of the work is of special importance as pointing out those arguments of the Skeptical philosophy which Augustine thought most weighty, and therefore in all probability those which had exercised most influence on himself, as well as the counter reasonings he found most effective in his own case. Alypius is not satisfied with Augustine's definition of the probable, which he makes a question of words, whereas the Academics merely employed it as a principle of action.[1] Augustine then points out that the definition of a wise man as one ignorant of wisdom is a clear contradiction in terms, for no man can be wise without partaking of wisdom. The position of the Skeptics necessitates the postulate either that wisdom is equivalent to nothing or that it resembles falsehood. Alypius suggests that truth is like Proteus—continually assuming new forms,[2] so that it cannot be apprehended except by some Divine interposition. To this Augustine assents. Alypius then requests Augustine to abandon this mode of discussion, and to refute the Academics in a formal discourse. Augustine assents: he begins by an account of preceding philosophies, and their several relations to the New Academy. The two points of Skeptical misbelief which he especially contravenes are: (1) that nothing can be truly perceived; (2) that to no proposition or dogma is an unqualified assent to be given. As to the first, he shows that no opinion of the unreliableness of the senses can enable us to dispense with their communications, or in practice to refrain from trusting them most implicitly. He also proves that logic, or the laws of the mind, enable us to arrive at truth, for of two alternative antagonistic propositions it asserts one to be undeniably true. As to the second point, the inconsistency of arrogating the name of wise, while the possibility of possessing wisdom is denied, is again pointed out The delusive nature of probability as a substitute for truth is also insisted on, and Augustine reveals the chief motive-influence of his change from Academic unbelief to

[1] This, though true of the scope originally assigned to probability by Karneades, is not true of the scope it came ultimately to possess among his disciples, as is conclusively shown by Cicero and Sextos Empeirikos. Comp. account of Karneades, *ante*, vol. i. pp. 308–321.

[2] Augustine himself occasionally admits the individualistic, and so far the manifold character of truth: 'Veritas et una est, et multæ, quia multæ animæ quas illustrat,' *Op. om.* iv. 65. In the same sense he says, 'Qui vult habere veritatem privatam (*i.e.* absolute truth) timeat ne eâ privetur.'—*Confess.* p. 242.

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Christian certitude by maintaining that the man who trusts to well-founded authority is much more likely to attain truth than he who mistrusts in probability. The Academics, he further declares, act hypocritically in dissembling their real sentiments. He traces the origin of their mistake to a one-sided and materialistic interpretation of Plato's teaching. In this section we have the encomium of Plato, afterwards withdrawn in the 'Retractations,' as the 'wisest and most learned man of his time, who so spake that whatever he said thereby became great, and uttered things that howsoever spoken could never be insignificant.'[1] Augustine makes a good point by showing the unfitness of probability to become a ground of ethical action. Error consists not only in a tendency to the false, but in departure from the true, which with a mere standard of probability can never be avoided. What would then become of the rigid undeviating test of right and wrong which is the first principle of moral action? Under the fluctuating law of probability the adulterer would be able to justify his vice, the betrayer of his country would apologize for his treason in some Catiline-oration—in short, all the fundamental principles of social order would be fatally undermined.[2]

Such are a few of the salient points in Augustine's argumentation with his fellow-Skeptics. Although the work contains much discursive and irrelevant matter, and is not devoid of the verbal quibbling one might naturally expect in a rhetor's exercitation, no one can deny its subtlety, its comprehensive breadth of view, nor on the whole its impartiality. How far it may be regarded as a triumphant refutation of Skepticism will depend materially on the mental character and point of view of the student, as well as his prepossessions at the time. What is significant is, that Augustine did not think his arguments, though the best he could offer, unanswerable to Skeptics;[3] indeed, he expressly states that their influence on himself was only partial. The words in which he avows this and concludes his treatise are of considerable importance, both as exhibiting his standpoint when they were written, and as indicating the motives by which he determined to guide his future intellectual course:—

'This have I meanwhile persuaded myself, so far as the prob

[1] *Om. op.* i. col. 291.

[2] *Om. op.* i. col. 290, 291.

[3] See the remarkable passage, ep. i. Hermogiano, *Op. om.* i. 245, 246. Dr. Bindemann observes on this, somewhat needlessly, 'Dass Augustinus an dieser Ansicht stets festgehalten habe, ist mehr als zweifelhaft.'—*Op. cit.* i. p. 307, note.

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ability of the case and my own ability permitted, concerning the Academics, which, if it be false, matters not to me, for whom it is enough not to share the opinion that truth cannot be attained by man. But whosoever supposes that the Academics really thought this, let him listen to Cicero himself. For he says they had a way of hiding their opinion, nor would they divulge it to any one, unless to him who lived together with them till old age. However this may be, God knows, but I believe that opinion (*i.e.* that men cannot attain truth) to have been Plato's. But that you may receive briefly the whole of my present argument:—of whatever kind human wisdom may be, I acknowledge that I have not yet attained it. But inasmuch as I am only thirty-three years of age, I do not think I ought to despair of some time acquiring it. Hence, despising all other objects which mortals call good, I intend to follow up this investigation. From which enterprise, since the arguments of the Academics have very considerably deterred me, I have fortified myself enough against them, as I think, by means of this disputation. No man, however, doubts that we are impelled to knowledge by a twofold impulse, viz. of authority and of reason. As to the former, I have decided never more to depart from the authority of Christ, for I cannot find a stronger.[1] As to what should be pursued by the most subtle exercise of the reason —for I am so constituted as to desiderate not only what is true by faith but its apprehension by the intellect—I am persuaded that for the present I shall find it in the system of the Platonists, which is not opposed to our sacred writings.'[2]

It must be admitted this conclusion of his argument against the Academics is somewhat paradoxical. We might almost characterize it as a semi-Skeptical termination of an anti-Skeptical work.[3] His confessed obligation to reason as well as to authority; his claim to understand what he is asked to believe; his faith in

[1] Comp. *Contr. Epistol. Manich.* i. c. 4: 'Quæ quidem (veritas) si tam manifesta monstratur ut in dubium venire non possit, præponenda est omnibus illis rebus quibus in Catholica teneor: si autem tantummodo permittitur et non exhibetur, nemo me movebit ab ea fide.'

[2] *Op. om.* i. col. 294.

[3] Simon Foucher, who (with Gassendi) is the chief exponent of Academic philosophy in modern times, does not scruple to maintain that Augustine remained an Academic Skeptic and Platonist for the rest of his life. He says that the books *contra Academicos* were really written, 'not against, but for them;' that the Academics against whom he directed his arguments were not the true thinkers of the name, but those who were regarded as such by the vulgar. Comp. Nourisson, *Philosophie*, &c. ii. p. 237, and *Simon Foucher*, par l'Abbé F. Rabbe, pp. 142, 143, &c.

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the Platonic philosophy, which, he admits, denies the possibility of attaining truth—all point in the direction of the intellectual vacillation of the recent convert to Christianity. True, he owns the authority of Christ as the most valid he could then discover; but that authority was at first based upon intellectual and moral grounds, without which, he tells us, it would have had no existence for him.

But leaving for the present Augustine's Skepticism, we must now retrace our steps and consider the various influences which conspired to transform the Academic doubter into the Christian teacher.

Augustine's residence in Rome did not last much over one year. In the early part of 384 he learned that the magistrates of Milan had applied to Symmachus, the Prefect of Rome, for a professor of rhetoric. Augustine asked for this appointment, and after satisfying Symmachus, himself a proficient in rhetoric, of his fitness, he obtained it. Accordingly he left Rome, and, accompanied by his friend Alypius, proceeded to Milan. This town was then the seat of a well-ordered and flourishing Christian Church, presided over by the celebrated St. Ambrose. It is hardly possible to exaggerate the influence this auspicious presentation of Christianity had on the sensitive mind of Augustine. The bishop was one of the most illustrious leaders of the Latin Church. Renowned for his learning, his eloquence, and his piety, he was precisely the character to captivate the young professor of rhetoric. For probably the first time in his life Augustine beheld Christianity in its highest, noblest, and richest development. He saw it united not with sectarian narrowness, but with sympathies of considerable breadth and comprehension. He saw it combined not with ignorance, but with great and varied learning; not with uncouth speech and expression, but with the graces of eloquence and the glow of rhetoric; not with mean and ignoble or even an ordinary presence, but with the venerable aspect and dignified bearing of a true religious leader. Added to these public and generally recognised attributes were the fascinations of his personal intercourse. Ambrose received the young rhetor with unaffected courtesy and kindness; and Augustine soon became, first a friend, and then a disciple of the famous Bishop of Milan.

But if Augustine was first attracted to Ambrose by a common interest in rhetoric, and by the artistic form in which he presented the doctrines of Christianity, his was not the intellect to be satisfied with the mere plausible appearance of truths proffered for his acceptance. Although Ambrose's sermons were to his fastidious taste a more congenial introduction to Christianity than

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the Bible, he could not accept them without criticism. Accordingly, as continued intercourse with the Bishop afforded him opportunity, Augustine took occasion to communicate to him his various difficulties and misgivings on the subject of Christianity. First in importance were his old Manichæan doubts as to the Bible, especially the narratives of the Old Testament. Augustine was probably surprised at the ease with which they disappeared under the allegorical treatment that Ambrose had borrowed from Origen. Miraculous events in the ancient Jewish records, narratives of doubtful moral import, anthropomorphic conceptions of Deity, unworthy views of His dealings with humanity, were readily transmuted and rendered innocuous if not edifying, by this most potent of all exegetical methods. The pregnant words of Paul—'The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life'—were perpetually on the lips of the Bishop of Milan, and Augustine readily accepted them, not only as an useful key to the interpretation of Holy Writ, but as eminently suited to his own fervid imagination and many-sided intellect. Later on, with the development of hierarchical pretensions and dogmatic proclivities, we shall find that he distrusted the allegorical method.

Concurrently with modified ideas as to Biblical interpretation, Augustine's subtilizing instincts were further strengthened and confirmed by a study of the later Platonists, especially of Plotinos. These writers, with their sublimating methods, exercised the same solvent power on his interpretation of Christian dogmas that Ambrose's allegorical exegetics did on his Bible studies. Both the written records and the traditional teachings of Christianity were thus submitted to a similar idealizing operation. Religious belief was becoming not a matter of reasoning and criticism as much as of imagination and feeling, and a road in full harmony with Augustine's proclivities and with the bent of his mental character was thus opened for him towards the reception of Christian truth. But Augustine's progress in this new path was slow, nor could the influence of Ambrose, nor the exhortations of his mother who came to reside with him at Milan, hasten his movements. He had already been more than once deceived—Manichæanism had cajoled him with a profession of truth which he discovered to be false; Academic philosophy had offered him probability as a substitute for truth, an unsatisfactory alternative to a man of his sanguine temperament. Might not Christianity also deceive him? True, there were aspects in its character and history that seemed to attest its truth. Many of his old objections to it had been removed by Ambrose. The more he applied his

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Neo-Platonic metaphysics to its interpretation, the easier seemed its dogmas. For all that, Augustine proceeded with wary step. He exercised the true Skeptical caution: 'I avoided,' he says,[1] 'everything like assent, dreading precipitation, rather than which I would suffer the torture of suspense. For I wanted to be just as sure of invisible things as I was that seven and three make ten.' But it was precisely this assent—the unquestioning adherence to authoritatively announced truth—that Christianity demanded under the name of faith. Reflection indeed ultimately suggested the analogy that belief in matters transcending our personal experience was a *sine quâ non* of all social existence, and from this fact he inferred, without giving much heed to the successive steps of his ratiocination, the similar necessity of belief in Holy Scripture, and hence in the Church—a principle which, as propounded by Augustine, we shall have to examine further on. Meanwhile he continued in this condition of uncertainty for about two years. That the scale, however, was beginning to turn in the direction of Christianity is shown by his becoming a catechumen, and thus a regular recipient of Christian instruction. We can imagine the joy of his mother over this event, and her eagerness to regard it as a prognostication of her son's full acceptance of Christianity, which had been the object of her prayers for so many years.

But it was not only his inner life, intellectual and religious—for with Augustine these were indissoluble—that was the subject of uncertainty and hesitation. He was also dissatisfied with his social position and worldly prospects.[2] From his earliest years he had been the prey of ambitious desires and expectations, which as yet he had failed to realize. Now, not without the co-operation of his mother, who shared his ambitious projects, and who on this occasion manifested a tendency to maternal intrigue which one would hardly have expected to find in St. Monica, Augustine took steps to improve his fortunes by marriage. In order to accomplish this, the poor mother of Adeodatus, who had been faithful to him for so many years, was cruelly sent adrift, and proposals were made to a certain lady of wealth and position. These were accepted; but as the lady was young the ceremony was delayed for two years, and the match was subsequently broken off. Monica was disappointed at the untoward result of her matrimonial plotting. To say the truth, it was not only her son's worldly prospects but his

[1] *Confess.* pp. 86, 87.

[2] *Confess.* viii. 1: 'De mea vero temporali vita nutabant omnia.'

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spiritual weal that animated her zeal. Foreseeing that he might ultimately be induced to accept Christian baptism, she was anxious that his marriage should precede that event. His conduct proved how well founded were his mother's anxieties in this respect, for no sooner did he discover that his marriage was to be delayed than, having dismissed his former mistress, he immediately took another.[1] With all the conditions and circumstances, both of his inner and outer life, thus disturbed, it is no wonder that Augustine suffered sometimes from fits of despondency. To such an unreflecting excess did he allow these to dominate over him that on one occasion he is inclined to envy even the sottish happiness of a drunken beggar whom he met in the streets of Milan.

Meanwhile his instruction in the elements of Christianity was proceeding. He had now arrived at the point of believing most of the doctrines of the Church, with the exception of the Incarnation. This dogma he could not for some time reconcile with the reason which he still brought to bear on all doctrines submitted for his acceptance. Some aid in receiving the ecclesiastical construction of that doctrine he derived from his Neo-Platonic studies,[2] for he found a similar doctrine in Plotinos, though not conceived from so materialistic a standpoint. From the same source he derived

[1] In relating this transaction, Augustine has the grace to admit that his behaviour contrasts unfavourably with that of his rejected concubine, the mother of Adeodatus. 'Et illa in Africam redierat, vovens tibi (*i.e.* Deo) alium se virum nesciturum, relicto apud me naturali ex illa filio meo. At ego infelix nec feminæ imitator, dilationis impatiens, tanquam post biennium accepturus eam quam petebam, quia non amator conjugii sed libidinis servus eram; procuravi aliam, non utique conjugem.'—*Confess.* p. 101. Few of Augustine's biographers seem inclined to bestow much compassion on the lot of the unfortunate mother of Adeodatus, so harshly treated by her unworthy protector. All that the Abbé Flottes, *e.g.* finds to reprehend is, that Augustine had not remained faithful to her *until his marriage*! Dr. Bindemann, without openly blaming Augustine, paints his behaviour in characters sufficiently dark by his description of the poor forsaken woman's lot: 'Die arme Verstossene, die auch ohne das Eheband dem Manne ihrer Wahl aufrichtige Liebe und Treue erhalten zu haben scheint, und jetzt einsam in ihre Heimath zurückkehrte, gelobte scheidend, nimmer wieder einen anderen Mann zu erkennen. Ihren Sohn Adeodatus liess sie bei seinem Vater zurück.' Something like genuine compunction for the 'wrecked life' he had caused would have been worth some hundreds of the pious ejaculations scattered so profusely throughout the *Confessions*, and a little womanly sympathy for the fallen sister, whose greatest infirmity had been fidelity to her profligate son, had certainly not detracted from the brilliancy of the aureole with which ecclesiastical tradition has surrounded the head of the pious Monica.

[2] *Confess.* vii. 19, p. 120.

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enlightenment, both as to the being and attributes of God, and the nature of evil. Under the guidance of Ambrose he once more recommenced his Biblical studies. To his question as to the portion of Scripture best adapted for his perusal, his teacher responded by recommending the prophet Isaiah—advice which, coming from one rhetorician to another, may readily be understood; but Augustine seems to have especially concentrated his attention on St. Paul, with whom he had considerable mental and spiritual affinity. Indeed, he not only accepted his scheme of theology, but so formulated and elaborated it as to give it, in the opinion of many persons, an undue precedence over the simpler teaching of Christ in the subsequent history of the Church.

The result of these various studies, together with continued intercourse with Ambrose and other prominent ecclesiastics of Milan, was to induce a determination to receive Christian baptism. The more immediate circumstances attending this resolution are well known. Like so many other men of his imaginative temperament, Augustine was by no means without a taint of superstition. His mother Monica continually received Divine warnings and directions in dreams, and in every important conjuncture of his life Augustine regarded himself as the object of special supernatural admonition. Having heard of a certain hermit who had been induced to embrace Christianity by a Biblical sortilegium [1]—a mode of seeking Divine guidance not yet extinct among the ignorant and superstitious of several European countries—Augustine resorted to the pious lottery on his own behalf. Taking a copy of St. Paul's Epistles and opening it, his eye caught the words, 'Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.' He felt the striking applicability of the text to his own irregular and immoral life, and considered the warning as one sent immediately from heaven. To a plain man, however, it might seem not impertinent to suggest that the observance of rudimentary principles of ethical conduct scarcely needed the sanction of such an haphazard oracle. One might have thought that the instructions of Ambrose and other leading ecclesiastics of Milan, together with the continued exhortations of

[1] Readers of Petrarca will remember the oracular response the great humanist received on consulting Augustine's *Confessions* for a similar purpose, and which had the effect of 'converting' him from explorations of nature to investigations of the human mind.

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his mother, might have sufficed to produce a conviction both of the sin and degradation of the vices mentioned by St. Paul, even if his own independent reflection were incapable of enforcing a similar conclusion. But in truth Augustine's was a nature unwilling to be ruled except by outward force and external sanction, and the gist of his numerous writings serves to show that he considered every man amenable only to similar influences. The basis of his morality is indicated by his confession that the change in his immoral course of life was chiefly prompted by the fear of future punishment. Were it not, he adds, for this deterrent, he himself would choose to be an Epikourean philosopher. Augustine's ethics, we thus perceive, is based entirely on the common theological opinion that what constitutes the guilt or immorality of an act is simply its deviation from the supposed express injunctions of Deity, moral duties deriving no part of their obligation from inherent properties or relations. His adhesion to Christianity, as we shall shortly see, is similarly based upon external compulsion.

Augustine was baptized by Ambrose in the year 387, which date we may accordingly accept as approximately the termination of his free-search and philosophical Skepticism. The remaining events in his life we need not pursue in detail. Ordained priest in 388, and Bishop of Hippo in the following year, the rest of his life was occupied in elaborating his dogmatic system and contending with heresiarchs. He died in the year 430.

I have just said that Augustine's Skepticism ends *approximately* with his baptism. What I mean is: there are similarities and coincidences between his Free-thought and dogmatic periods which make his transition from one to the other not a psychological impossibility. Augustine's intellect was much too powerful and independent blindly to accept a creed that possessed no affinity whatever with innate proclivities and long-cherished modes of thought. Indeed, conversions from an extreme of philosophy or religion to its opposite, with no intervening resting-place, or the least graduation in departure from the old and approximation to the new, are possible only to weak or ill-balanced intellects. Hence we continue to find in Augustine a large measure of free-speculation, partly lying side by side with, partly involved in and animating his dogma. We discover that if the principle of authority, once the exclusive property of the reason, is now delegated to Christianity, it has not altogether lost its former independence. We perceive that Augustine's Skepticism has become not so much extinct as transformed from theory to practice, from philosophy to religion. In a word, we find that if the philosopher has been converted into

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a divine, the Skeptic into a Dogmatist, the heathen rhetor into the Christian preacher,[1] the same strong individuality is apparent in each stage of the process—the original thought, so vividly impressed on Augustine the Manichæan and Academic Skeptic, is not absolutely extinguished by the mitre of the Bishop of Hippo, and that whatever other effects followed his baptism and its accompanying rites, the older spirits of free-research and rationalism were not completely exorcised by the administration of that sacrament.

I. Augustine's primary motive in accepting Christianity was clearly the determination to choose and submit to authority as a rule of faith. Hitherto he had proceeded on the opposite tack. He had set forth at the age of nineteen years in quest of truth—truth which he endeavoured to acquire as a personal possession. He had followed what appeared to be the dictates of his own reason, employing the enlightenment of different promising systems to aid him in his search. When after much wandering and no little anxiety he arrived at the conviction that truth was unattainable by human effort, he began to conceive as a possibility that it might be the object of Divine Revelation. Clearly the philosophies of Greece had failed to discover truth. The Skepticism of the Academy was itself a distinct admission of the failure. Could it be that truth was a nonentity, or rather a falsehood? Had God infused into the breasts of men a passion, deep, fervent, inextinguishable, for which He had provided no suitable object? That the passion existed was clear from the efforts of so many of the noblest of mankind to attain truth, from the claims of so many to have really acquired it. As to its realization, it was refuted by the conflicting views of those very claimants. Truth in itself, said Augustine, must be one, even if its human perception be characterized by individual peculiarities. Might it not be that God, who instilled the passion into human hearts, had reserved for Himself the manner of satisfying it? If superhuman in origin, might it not also be superhuman in the mode of its gratification? Human

[1] Dr. Bindemann points out that Augustine's *Sermons* and most of his other works are in reality rhetorical and dialectical exercitations (ii. p. 164, &c.), so that what Augustine did in abandoning his calling of rhetor was in reality to transfer it from the chair of the professor to the pulpit of the Christian teacher. Indeed, he himself lays the greatest stress on the necessity of logic to rule the form, and rhetoric to supply the requisite graces to every presentation of Christian truth. Cicero was in this respect his model rather than the writers of the New Testament. So he says: 'Dixit quidam eloquens (Cicero) et verum dixit, ita dicere debere eloquentem, ut doceat, ut delectet, ut flectat.'

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authority so conspicuously failing,[1] did not an appeal lie open to Divine? and philosophy issuing in Skepticism, was there not only room but an imperious necessity for Revelation? True, he had himself adopted Skepticism as his temporary resting-place, but it was confessedly only as a *pis-aller*, or as a reconnoitring post whence he might determine his future course. In this state of hesitation Augustine came in contact with the Bishop of Milan. Here he saw Christianity, for the first time in his life, in its most attractive features. Here was a system claiming Divine origin, and attesting its claim by the rapidity of its growth and the grandeur and magnificence of its power. The 'gigantic edifice of Christian authority extending itself throughout the universe,' to use his own words, while it appealed to his imagination, seemed an opportune solution of his intellectual difficulties. He bowed his head before the inspiring ideal of a Church—one, universal, indivisible—which has captivated and deluded so many illustrious imaginations both before and since. He was misled by the conception of a 'Civitas Dei'—a kingdom of God, such as is falsely claimed to be represented by Romanism—an enormous spiritual power, deriving authority directly from heaven—the sole sacred and exclusive depository of all truth—governed by a hierarchy illustrious for its talents and venerable for its holiness, and ruling over weak and erring men with a wise, gentle, and infallible jurisdiction. Such was the Christian society, the Church Catholic, as Augustine depicted it in the warm glow of his imagination, with the prosperous Church of Milan, the venerated figure of Ambrose, the learning and piety of men like Jerome, Athanasius, and Cyprian, the devotion and purity of so many other Christians unknown to fame—of whom his mother was a type—as foreground accessories of the picture. There is no trace in Augustine's works of an impartial and critical estimate of the human agencies which contributed to the spread of Christianity. He regarded it not so much in its evolutionary as its static aspect, as it presented itself to him in Africa, at Rome, and at Milan at the end of the fourth century. He thought it impossible that it could have been established, preserved, and extended without Divine aid, and apart from Divine purpose. His single proof, not only of the Divine

[1] *I.e.* in philosophical and religious speculation. In matters of ordinary knowledge Augustine not merely admitted human authority, but made it a basis of generalization for Divine: *e.g.*: 'Juvat sequi auctoritatem et præcepta sapientum et per hæc loqui sibi Deum credere,' *Op. om.* i. 435. On the other hand: 'Rationi roborandæ, hominum auctoritatem quærere est imbecillitatis,' *Op. om.* i. 504.

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origin but also of the intrinsic truth of Christianity, was its rapid propagation and prosperity.[1] This was his continual reply to all doubts and criticisms from whatever source they emanated. To the Manichæans, Donatists, Arians, Pelagians, his demonstration of the truth and superiority of Christianity was, in one word, *circumspice*. Behold the growth, power, magnificence of the Church! The argument was not new; it is the stereotyped plea put forth again and again by the Christian apologists. But though not new it was effective; it appealed to accomplished facts, to evidences patent and indisputable. The Church had progressed. This was acknowledged by all. No heresiarch or hostile critic could help admitting the fact. So far as mere prosperity was an infallible evidence of truth, no testimony could be more satisfactory. What Augustine would have said to the smaller beginnings of Christianity, when its followers consisted of a few Galilæan peasants, what to the Church of 120 that assembled in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, what to the division of the Eastern from the Western Church, what to the Reformation, &c. we are left to guess. Certainly, if outward prosperity and universality are the only tests of truth, Augustine's argument can no longer be said to apply to any Church in Christendom. It was this prosperity that gave the Church its autocratic power, its

[1] On this point numberless passages from Augustine's works might easily be collected. Thus, speaking of the motives which induced him to join the Church, he says: 'Ut ergo hanc omittam sapientiam quam in Ecclesia esse Catholica non creditis' (he is addressing Manichæans) 'multa sunt alia quæ in ejus gremio me justissime teneant. *Tenet consensio populorum atque gentium:* tenet auctoritas miraculis inchoata, spe nutrita, caritate aucta, vetustate firmata: tenet ab ipsa sede Petri apostoli . . . usque ad præsentem episcopatum successio sacerdotum: tenet postremo ipsum Catholicæ nomen quod non sine causa inter tam multas hæreses sic ista Ecclesia sola obtinuit' (*Contra Epist. Man.* c. iv. *Op. om.* viii. 153). . . Compare also the following: 'Si ergo incognita crediturus sum cur non ea potius credam quæ jam *consensione doctorum indoctorumque celebrantur*, et per *omnes populos gravissima auctoritate firmata sunt?*' (*Op. om.* viii. 161) . . . 'Si ergo ad millia fabulosorum phantasmatum te auctoritati ignotissimæ et furiosissimæ subdidisti . . . cur non potius Evangelicæ auctoritati, *tam fundatæ, tam stabilitæ, tanta gloria diffamatæ*, atque ab Apostolorum temporibus usque ad nostra tempora per successiones certissimas commendatæ non te subdis' (*C. Faustum*, xxxii. 19). Similarly, the diffusion of Holy Scripture, as though it were independent of the extension of the Church, becomes the chief proof of its truth. '. . . jam credere cœperam nullo modo te (Deum) fuisse tributurum tam excellentem illi Scripturæ per omnes jam terras auctoritatem, nisi et per ipsam tibi credi et per ipsam te quæri voluisses' (*Confess.* p. 89).

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supreme authority over the consciences of men. If we would ask the source of this authority, we are told it is not truth. It consists: (1) of miracles; (2) the number of disciples.[1] According to Augustine there was a 'pre-established harmony' between truth and numbers, so that the latter might always be accepted as a criterion of the power. A true religion, he thought, could not exist without the accompaniment of a powerful and supreme authority.[2] That he regarded the authority as extrinsic and separable from the truth of Christianity, a Divine but adventitious sanction of it, is conclusively shown in a remarkable passage, where he says that he would not have believed the gospel unless the authority of the Church had compelled him;[3] words which imply not only an imperfect conception, but an absolute inversion of the true relations between Christ and His Church; and which, therefore, it is painful to find in a man of Augustine's great mental power.[4] The thought never seems to have occurred to him—if the Church testifies for the gospel, who, or what, will testify for the Church? or, if the compulsion of the Church be his sole reason for embracing Christianity, might not the same compulsion urge him to other beliefs than the

[1] *De Util. Cred.*, *Op. om.* viii. col. 67. In a subsequent passage he adds, 'The succession of bishops and councils.' The soundest argument of the treatise, on behalf of authority, is its necessity to man as a social being—*ζῶον πολιτικόν*.' *Op. om.* viii. cols. 62, 68.

[2] 'Vera religio . . . sine quodam gravi auctoritatis imperio iniri recte nullo pacto potest, *De Util. Cred.* c. 9. Compare the passages accumulated in notes *d* and *f* of the *Confessions*, *Bib. Patr.* p. 87.

[3] *Contra Epistolam Manichæi*, cap. v. *Op. om.* viii. 154: 'Ego vero Evangelio non crederem, nisi me Catholicæ Ecclesiæ commoverit auctoritas.'

[4] Ritter is among the few modern writers who have called attention to this fundamentally false conception of Augustine, and its baneful influence both on himself and his disciples. Not only does Christ thus become the mere creature of the Church, but the Church as the only source of truth, authorizes Holy Scripture, authenticates and sanctions all science and philosophy, and establishes and even creates ethical laws and prescriptions. It seems curious that a man of Augustine's intellectual penetration did not perceive the mischief of this unbounded ecclesiasticism, from which Christendom has suffered so severely. Comp. Ritter, *Geschichte*, vi. p. 432. In the fourteenth century the falsehood of Augustine's dictum was clearly pointed out by Marsilio of Padua, in his celebrated *Defensor Pacis*, who remarks: 'Non enim dicta Christi vera sunt causaliter, eo quod eisdem testificetur Ecclesia Catholica, sed testimonium ecclesiæ causaliter verum est propter veritatem dictorum Christi' (Goldast, *Monarch.* ii. p. 255), or, as Wessel more pithily expressed the same truth, 'Evangelio credimus, et propter Evangelium Ecclesiæ et Papæ, non Evangelio propter Ecclesiam.'—Goldast, *Monarch.* i. p. 567.

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gospel, perhaps differing widely from it? Nor are these words a mere rhetorical ἅπαξ λεγόμενον, an unique expression of a *modus credendi* not to be found elsewhere. Striking as they are, they are no more than what he states repeatedly as to the grounds of his faith; indeed, as you will see, they only apply to himself the precise argument which he recommends so often to Donatists and Manichæans. But the principle thus naïvely admitted by Augustine deserves more than a passing allusion. We are here face to face with the primary misconception, the πρῶτον ψεῦδος on which the whole superstructure of Christian dogma is based. It is a distinct enunciation of ecclesiasticism pure and simple. He claims for the Church that character and prerogative which Romanism has so perniciously asserted for so many centuries, *i.e.* it is not the organ and vehicle, but the absolute and infallible source of Christian truth. As such it is superior even to its Founder. Not the gospel but the Church claims our allegiance. Not the actual living Christ, but doctrines, creeds, and dogmas not to be found in His teaching, and, being speculative rather than practical, ritual rather than ethical, are even opposed diametrically to it. Undoubtedly if the history of the Church teaches one lesson more clearly than another it is the baneful influence of this servile dogmatism, together with its allied sacerdotalism, both in those who administer and those who receive it. And the same history forms a doleful commentary on Augustine's words, and the enormous distance by which the authority of the Church may become separated from the teaching of Christ. Nor is the psychological aspect of this position unworthy of notice. Augustine is not ordinarily credited with maintaining the doctrine of Twofold Truth. An overt profession of such a slippery tenet he would in all probability have strongly denounced; but in thus making his religious belief the result of coercion, and a coercion which must *ab initio* have been external to himself, he is really advancing a mode of belief hardly distinguishable from Twofold Truth. He distinctly avows that his volition has been forced; and the very statement implies that his mental being has been divided. What these sympathies or reasonings were which Christian dogma forcibly suppressed he does not tell us. They were probably the convictions of his rationalistic period, when, *e.g.* he refused to accept the doctrine of the Incarnation. Anyhow, there was a spiritual contention within him between—(1) inherent proclivity, intellectual or spiritual; (2) outward compulsion on the part of ecclesiasticism. Further, the very terms in which he announces the victory of the latter over the former proclaim that it was obtained at the cost of some sacrifice. The emphatic 'I

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would never have believed' announces the survival of no small amount of the old Adam of intellectualism. I do not for a moment suppose that this old leaven was not finally subdued, but there can be no question that it existed during some portion of his ecclesiastical development.

That this obedience to Christian dogma 'on compulsion' might be interpreted as sanctioning Twofold Truth is shown in the similar applications of that principle by such Free-thinkers as Le-Vayer, Bruno, and Vanini. In some of these instances the assertion of the principle meant merely 'emotional conviction,' the adherence of the feeling and affections to beliefs which have been surrendered by the intellect; but it has also been employed for a more suspicious purpose, viz. to express an ironical or purely verbal adherence to external authority in cases where a *bonâ fide* adherence might be a matter of difficulty if not impossibility.

From the point of view of Augustine's principle of authority, his celebrated work 'De Civitate Dei'—'Of the Kingdom of God'—has a peculiar significance. It embodies in an elaborate form, and with a suitable magnificence of thought and diction, that imperial representation of Christianity which had first fascinated him. Though composed some years after his conversion, and evincing a temper soured and sympathies narrowed by dogmatic habits of thought and episcopal administration, the outline and main argument of the work consists of that aspect of Christianity which always appeared to him most irresistible. He starts from a standpoint of Dualism which may possibly be a reminiscence of his Manichæan period. The Church is a Divine, superhuman sovereignty, placed by God in juxtaposition with an earthly and secular dominion, and destined to counteract its malificent influence. These two antagonistic states Augustine traces from the earliest history of humanity. The kingdom of God is found in the Bible and in Jewish history; the kingdom of the world or the devil belongs to profane history and to Gentile religions and philosophies.[1] The former finds its final consummation in the glories of heaven, the latter in the eternal torments of hell. The intention of the work is to prove the Divine design of establishing the Church as the exclusive source of truth upon the ruin of all other kingdoms, systems, and institutions of whatever kind—an ideal dream that came nearest to realization by Hildebrand.

[1] It is noteworthy that Augustine, at this period of his life, makes especial exception of the Platonic philosophy, at least to the extent of admitting that it had discovered the true God.

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Such a purpose, if consistently pursued, necessarily induces a partial and unsympathetic treatment of alien peoples, thoughts, and creeds. The very conception of the Church as the sole depository of truth puts, *ipso facto*, all other truth-claimants out of court. But while in idea Augustine's 'kingdom of God' is largely dominated by a harsh, arbitrary, and dogmatic spirit, it possesses in detail considerable value as a treasury of ancient lore, as well as occasionally of subtle, original, and profound thought.

Comparing Augustine's conception of the 'kingdom of God' with the 'kingdom of heaven' as conceived by Christ,[1] we are made aware of the growth of dogmatic Christianity in the four centuries that had elapsed since its beginning. What we especially observe in Augustine is the striking absence of sympathy and tolerance for non-Christian modes of thought, and an estimate of all human history from the exclusive standpoint of the Bishop of Hippo. We find his usual tendency to make material prosperity the mark of truth and Divine favour—the doctrine that orthodox faith supersedes moral excellence, nay, that without this faith all virtue and self-denial is nothing else but a gorgeous lie;—the representation of God as a sovereign pontiff rather than as the merciful Father of all mankind. In short, we find, either in germ or in some stage of development, the worst tendencies of dogmatic Christianity. We hence perceive that Christianity has already lost its primal purity and freshness, that it possesses no longer the freedom, the humanity, the peace and calm of its earliest form. Augustine's kingdom of God stands in the same ratio to the diviner ideal of the Gospels as the proud sovereignty of Louis XIV. might be said to bear to some free Swiss or Italian republic, or as the suspicious temper, the sordid care, the restless ambition of a man spoilt by contact with the world bears to the freedom, trustfulness, and generosity of youth. And if Augustine's conception compares disadvantageously with Christ's ideal, its condemnation is no less distinctly written in subsequent ecclesiastical history. Few patristic writings have been received with more favour by Romanist theologians than the 'De Civitate.' Frequently it has been held to supply a basis and justification of the most exorbitant excesses of Papal domination. The growth and development of that power afford an instructive illustration of the real working of a kingdom claiming to be of God, but in truth administered by

[1] For the purpose of this comparison, a study is recommended of the 4th, 18th, and 19th Books of the *De Civitate*, on the one hand, and of the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables of the Kingdom, on the other.

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men more than ordinarily human in all that relates to the weakness and fallibility, the pride and presumption, the lust and passion, of the race.[1] Against this pernicious sovereignty the Reformation was a glorious and successful insurrection, and it is not too much to say that the liberty and prosperity of modern nations depend in no small measure on the resistance they oppose to its claims.

But though the authority of the Church was Augustine's first motive in embracing Christianity, we are not warranted in assuming that the surrender of his reason was made immediately and unconditionally. No doubt Augustine must have determined that the chief doctrines of Christianity were capable of being defended by rational means, or at least by reason acting in conjunction with and subserviency to devout imagination. His employment of allegory, *e.g.* had made the Bible more credible and more edifying. His Neo-Platonic studies had divested some of the dogmas of the Christian faith of their most embarrassing aspects. If all his difficulties had not disappeared (and in the year of his baptism he expressly disavows having yet discovered truth), he was warranted in thinking that a method he had proved to be so effective might be equal to their complete extermination. For the present, however, Reason is 'scotched' rather than killed; indeed, for the greater part of his after-career she occasionally, but with increasing feebleness, seems to wish to assert her former independence,[2] though ultimately she is reduced to complete sub-

[1] Cf. Bp. Thirlwall's works *passim* on this point.

[2] 'Credere autem tunc est culpandum, cum vel de Deo indignum aliquid creditur vel de homine facile creditur.'—*De Util. Cred., Op. om.* viii. 61. But a whole catena of passages condemnatory of rash belief, and laudatory of wholesome ignorance, may be gathered from Augustine's works. Here are a few of such sentences:—

'Magis eligo cautam ignorantiam confiteri quam falsam scientiam profiteri.'—*Op. om.* ii. 739.

'Non erubescendum est homini confiteri se nescire quod nescit, ne dum se scire mentitur, numquam scire mereatur.'—*Op. om.* ii. 704.

'Melior est fidelis ignorantia, quam temeraria scientia.'—*Op. om.* v. 144.

'Ignorantiæ confessio gradus est Scientiæ.'—*Op. om.* v. 1223.

'Melius est nescire quam errare.'—*Op. om.* iii. 445.

'Ignorantia in Dei rebus magis pia est quam præsumpta Scientia.'—*Op. om.* v. 582.

'Ignorantia quædam docta Spiritu Dei.'—*Op. om.* ii. 393.

Comp. Letter to Consentius, *Ep.* 120 *passim*, on the relation of faith and reason.

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ordination as the *ancilla theologiæ*, being deprived of all volition, and compelled to exercise her ratiocination in strict obedience to the behests, and with a single eye to the interests, of theology.[1] But though reason may thus have been a concurrent influence in his first adoption of Christianity and the principle of authority, it was by no means the only or even primary motive. As I have remarked, Augustine was chiefly led by his vivid and powerful imagination. By the aid of that forward and irresponsible faculty he conceived the Church as the ideal source and abode of truth. He depicted its origin, its claims, its growth, its power, and its destiny in the brilliant forms and warm hues which his fancy conjured up, and which he incontinently transferred to the canvas of his intellect, employing his reason merely as a convenient 'dryer' to give his colouring the requisite hardness and finish.

And this leads me to observe that Augustine's adoption of authority, strange as it may seem, is in reality based upon Skepticism. He adopts it as a test of truth, because he claims to have discovered the comparative imbecility of reason. He accepts dogma for the express reason of the absolute failure of intellectual research. Few persons, I think, adequately consider how closely akin uninquiring Dogmatism is to complete Skepticism, and how nearly extremes, apparently so antagonistic, really meet. For the same consciousness of impotence which leads men to distrust their own faculties and judgment ought, if consistently applied, to induce a similar distrust of every definitive conclusion or dogma that they determine to accept. The imbecility that prompts and justifies a negative must *à fortiori* vitiate an affirmative. Nor is the principle really affected by the fact that in the adoption of dogma we place confidence in those who possess more enlightenment than ourselves: if I, *e.g.* am totally unable to discover or discern truth of myself, I cannot decide whether others possess it or not. Hence, in embracing dogma, Augustine, like every other thinker in his position, is really impelled by Skeptical motives. In the mental vacuity of Academic Skepticism—so intolerable to a man of his warm feelings and ardent imagination—he is ready to accept superhuman dictation, or, using his own expression, 'the mind being too keen to apprehend truth, it must be received as a Divine and authoritative communication.'

[1] M. Bouchitté, in the *Dict. des Sciences Philosophiques* (art. 'Augustin'), comments on this tendency of Augustine's speculations, and points out the stress he occasionally places upon knowledge, not, however, for its own sake, but as the handmaid of faith.

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Nor was it only with regard to himself and his own experience that Augustine decided on the superiority of authority to reason. He considered the respective operations of the rival principles on the bulk of humanity, and on the laws that govern social existence. He found that as a teacher authority claimed, and in some respects rightly, more general influence than reason.[1] For as to things beyond their personal knowledge, men must to a very large extent rely on the experience of those better informed, and without the agreement arising from general uniformity of opinions, society would become a mere house divided against itself, and therefore doomed to destruction. The authority which secured this uniformity thus played the part of a lubricating agent in enabling the wheels of the social machine to work easily. Even morality was in most cases enforced less by its own inherent claims than by the coercive force of the will and customary usage of the community. A more questionable argument on the side of authority is Augustine's assertion[2] that Christ appealed to faith rather than to reason to confirm His teaching. So far as words go, this is no doubt true. Reason, as the highest faculty of discerning and receiving truth, is not once named in His teaching, but in reality the doctrines of Christ were, as we saw in the last chapter, utterly destructive of all constituted authority, as this was then understood by the Jews, and the principle to which He appealed, no matter by what name it was distinguished, was not only reliance on the inherent truth of His teaching, but on the consciousness of His hearers and their moral and spiritual perceptions; in other words, it was virtually an appeal to reason as against authority.

It is a common, perhaps not unnatural, fault of all dogmatists to place comparatively little stress on the momentous probability that the authority of fallible men—and no Revelation is conceivable except on that authority—may deceive. Augustine, however, contemplates this as a possibility in certain cases, but not with the result of lessening his confidence in authority. He puts the issue on a utilitarian basis: 'If authority fails us we are unfortunate, but if we have no authority we are still more so. Mental energy of any kind is better than a condition of helpless passivity, and therefore a misleading authority is better than none.'[3] We need not discuss this principle at present, for we shall have

[1] Cf. *De Util. Cred., Op. om.* viii. 62, &c.

[2] *De Util. Cred., Op. om.* viii. 65.

[3] 'Auctoritate decipi miserum est, sed certe miserius non moveri.'—*Op. om.* viii. 67.

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future opportunities of doing this. Besides, the question is clearly one of which the ultimate decision will depend mainly on the mental tendencies of those who answer it. That Augustine's solution was in harmony with his intellect and spiritual temperament we can readily perceive, though it is hardly one that a more critical and cautious thinker would be content, unreservedly, to accept.

II. Passing from the principle of authority as that which chiefly determined his reception of Christianity, some significance must be attached to the fact that the newer dogma was a not unnatural reaction from older free habits of thought. It was the revenge of the imagination for the assumed misleading of the intellect—the retaliation of faith and spiritual emotion for the supposed perversion of the reason. Throughout his career no characteristic is more clearly expressed, both in his thought and life, than a self-willed impulsiveness, of which the waywardness of his boyhood was a forecast. In all such characters the volitional energy, though apparently strong, is really weak. And this feebleness is strikingly exemplified by Augustine's behaviour in more than one conjuncture of his life. Having failed to find truth in Gentile schemes of thought, and thus reached the lowest ebb of conviction and knowledge, his very tendency to reaction would of itself create both an expectation and a readiness to take advantage of a recurrent flow. Hence, had Augustine never come in contact with Christianity, he would undoubtedly not have been long satisfied with the incertitude of the Academic philosophy. He must needs have become sooner or later a dogmatist, and in all probability one of a vigorous type. In this as in other respects Augustine presents a curious parallel to Pascal. In both cases we find mental powers of no mean order overborne by an imagination and religious passion of still greater force and vehemence. In both we have a will too easily led captive, whether by bodily passions or by the overmastering power of the feeling and the fancy. In both also, over-indulgence (for them) in intellectual speculation, as a kind of mental libertinism, ends by inducing a violent reaction in favour of emotion and religious sentiment. In other words, Skepticism of an extreme kind prepares the way for a dogmatism as extreme and perhaps still more unjustifiable.

III. But besides these reasons which pertain to Augustine's character and circumstances, other causes were hardly less instrumental in determining the bent of his mind to dogmatic Christianity. There were at least two points on which the Christian

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faith appeared to coincide with the methods and results of Skeptical speculation.

1. It distinctly admitted faith as a principle of action to be based upon imperfect knowledge. Augustine started on his intellectual career with the determination to know before he believed. He might have taken as his motto Abelard's apophthegm, indeed he calls it his own at one part of his life,[1] '*Intellige ut credas.*' His experience of Manichæanism, of Skepticism, and of other methods of Greek thought demonstrated the difficulty, to say the least, of such a purely intellectual creed. But precisely the same difficulty, he found, was also admitted by thoughtful Christians. They were far from professing demonstrative certainty as to the objects of their faith. On the other hand, they denied the possibility of such assurance. To 'walk by faith, not by sight,' was not only the necessity of the Christian, but constituted his peculiar and saving merit. To see partly as in a glass was his undeniable earthly destiny. No doubt there was between the belief of the Christian and the uncertainty of the Skeptic the profound distinction that the former was a religious, the latter an intellectual, principle: the resemblance between them was rather in germ than in development. Probability *e.g.*, could never transcend itself. No matter how closely it approximated to certainty, it could in theory never attain it. Skepticism drew a distinct line of demarcation between the two. With faith, on the other hand, the case was different. As a principle of assurance unfettered by conditions of positive knowledge, and deriving all its sustenance from itself, it possessed a vitality and inherent power of growth which was able by due nourishment not only to equal but even to transcend ordinary intellectual certitude, especially in warm, emotional, semi-mystical natures. Augustine's faith, as we shall see, was destined to acquire this higher demonstrative intensity. But even with these dissimilarities of development, both the faith of the Christian and the probability of the Academic operated in much the same manner as a principle of action.

2. But faith as a condition of imperfect knowledge found both a *raison d'être* and a peculiar intensity in another doctrine of ecclesiastical Christianity: I mean the natural depravity of man. So strikingly did this dogma coincide with Augustine's Skepticism, his experience of the intellectual imbecility of humanity, that we can hardly wonder at his acceptance of it as a complete solution of

[1] 'Intellige ut credas verbum meum; crede ut intelligas verbum Dei.'—*Aug. Serm.* xliii. near the end.

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what would otherwise have been an enigma. Not that Augustine was the first discoverer of the affinity between Nescience and an excessive depreciation of human nature. From the earliest history of Christianity the Skeptical argument had been employed, for evidential purposes, as an *à priori* justification of Divine Revelation both in its ethical and intellectual acceptation. By the early Christian Fathers [1] the confessions of ignorance, limitation, &c. on the part of Greek Skeptics were put forward to show the necessity of superhuman knowledge; and instances will frequently meet us among modern thinkers of a similar ratiocination. Indeed, I regard it as more than likely that Augustine's acceptance of Greek Skepticism, coming immediately after his long indoctrination into Manichæan ideas, may have led to his intensifying the doctrine of original sin which he received in Christianity. But this is a point we need not discuss here. We shall by-and-by have to consider more fully the part which this doctrine plays in Augustine's dogmatic development. At present it will suffice to note its influence in leading him to accept Christianity.

IV. Nor must we forget that there was in all likelihood a personal motive in a change of religion that involved a complete abandonment of his worldly calling and prospects. Augustine's conversion occurred in a crisis of his career. His removal from Carthage to Rome had not resulted in the increase of fame and prosperity he had anticipated. Nor did his stay at Milan materially improve his prospects. The celebrity he had long hoped to achieve was as yet a vision of the future. The matrimonial speculation by which he intended to give a new impetus to his fortunes had fallen through. In a word, the problem of his life still remained to be solved. It was just in this untoward conjuncture of circumstances that he became acquainted with Ambrose. He admired his eloquence and learning, and was probably astonished at the extent of his personal influence. The past career of the Bishop of Milan was well known to him. He could not help being struck by the fact that in many points it closely resembled his own. Here was the son of a heathen prefect who had attained the highest dignity in the Christian Church, and who found in that position ample room for the exercise of talents he had cultivated as a rhetor, who could still enjoy heathen literature and eloquence, and who combined, with the indulgence of tastes belonging to his past life, a present sphere of honour and dignity well fitted to satisfy his ambition, and to give employment to his administrative

[1] Hüber, *Philosophie der Kirchenväter*, pp. 14–81.

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capacities. Why should not that career become his own? Ambrose certainly encouraged in the interests of the Church all Augustine's wistful but coy advances towards Christianity, and Monica warmly seconded his efforts. I am far from thinking that this was a primary influence in Augustine's conversion, but that it occupies a foremost place among subordinate causes is, I think, borne out both by the ambitious schemes of his earlier life and by the hierarchical pride and despotic temper of his later episcopal career.

Such seem to me to have been the causes, intellectual, religious, and personal, that induced Augustine to become a Christian, and in fulfilment of early hopes and dreams to stamp his name indelibly on the page of human history.

But our concern with Augustine's Skepticism does not altogether end with his baptism, as might be supposed. For although the remainder of his life is a persistent and steady growth in the temper and methods of dogma, Skepticism of a pronounced kind still plays an incidental but not unimportant part in it. Hence it is necessary for the full consideration of our subject to cast a brief glance at Augustine's dogmatic system.

Of all the various speculative constructions which Christian theologians have laboriously built up, few can exceed in grandeur of outline, harmony of purpose, and minute elaboration of detail the complex scheme which Christendom owes to Augustine. Whatever criticism may be offered as to its want of conformity with the actual teachings of Christ, its unworthy conception of Divine Providence, its superb indifference to the feelings, instincts, and rights of humanity, its arbitrary and servile tendencies, every critic must allow the imposing character of the system as a whole. Like the spiritual dominion arrogated by Hildebrand, or the European sovereignty prospected by the First Napoleon, we have presented to us the magnificent outline of a despotism comprehending in its sway nothing less than the whole universe. In making our own brief estimate of it, it will suffice to consider it from two standpoints: God and man. We shall thus apprehend, if not all the minute details, the general spirit and import of Augustine's teaching.

1. Augustine's doctrine of God seems to me in many respects the most valuable part of his dogmatic teaching. Few readers whose knowledge of Augustine is limited only to the 'Confessions' but must have been struck by the diversity, the spirituality, the subtlety, the emotional intensity of his various conceptions of the Deity; and the 'Confessions' are by no means the most remarkable

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of his many works in this particular. A collection of these multifarious definitions and conceptions might easily be made which would go far to prove Augustine guilty of Pantheism,[1] if they could not be easily rebutted by many others which insist on the personality of the Deity. Much of Augustine's eclecticism on this subject is due not only to the reach and profundity of his intellect, but to the fact that his theology is largely derived from nature. So interpenetrated is he with the diversity of natural activities and phenomena, so fully persuaded of the divinity and omnipotence underlying every manifestation of these energies, that every portion of the material world becomes a sacred territory—a holy mountain and burning bush, in which the attentive ear may detect the still small voice of the Eternal. Augustine is indeed an eminent example of the comprehensive many-sided *théodicée*, which of necessity will result from the operation of a powerful and independent intellect on the various problems of nature and humanity. In every such case, the theologian's conclusions being emanations from and copies of the Infinite, it will not be wonderful if the *tout-ensemble* of his conceptions share the diversity and complexity so strongly impressed upon nature itself.

Augustine first of all discovers in Deity what he has so long sought, viz. truth. God is the absolute,[2] the universal, and eternal truth—the only source of truth for all existing beings. What he has been blindly endeavouring to find throughout his life is God. All his errors and wanderings had, though unconsciously, this for their object. When he was a Manichæan he conceived of God as of a substance. When he became an Academic, God as an attainable object was still further removed. Reduced with other truths to a mere probability, he could only be possessed, if at all, in a future world. But besides being absolute truth, God is also the single source of all beauty and of all goodness. 'O God,' he exclaims in the beginning of his 'Soliloquies,' 'Thou art the author of truth, the author of wisdom, the author of true and supreme existence, the source of happiness, the source of all that is good and beautiful, the source of intelligence, the source of our awakening and our enlightenment, the source of the trust by which we are admonished to return to Thee.'[3] God being truth itself, He con-

[1] Comp. *e.g.*: 'Sic est per cuncta diffusus, ut non sit qualitas mundi sed *substantia creatrix*, sine labore regens, et sine onere continens mundum' —*Op.* ii. p. 682; '*Dei natura ubique integra, ubique præsens* non in parte minor, et in parte major; sine ulla mole magna'—*Op.* viii. 161.

[2] Hüber, *Philosophie der Kirchenväter*, p. 260.

[3] 'Deus, per quem omnia, quæ per se non essent, tendunt esse . . .

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stitutes the highest object of the reason. All ratiocination that has not God for its single object is nugatory and false. On the other hand, the highest efforts of true reason must be essentially Divine. God is manifested to the human reason mainly in two ways: (1) by creation; (2) by His incarnate Word or wisdom. In creation, 'God is the cause of all substance, the reason of the understanding, and the order of existence.'[1] But though defining God as the life of all that lives, he is in no danger of being ensnared by Pantheism. He regards his own spiritual evolution as a progress from the material aspects of nature to the spiritual. This is in part the signification of his conversion from Manichæanism to Christianity. Many are the allusions in his writings to this change of view. 'This is,' he exclaims, 'what I love when I love my God—and who then is He? I asked the earth, and it answered me, It is not I, and everything it contains made also the same response. I asked the sea, the great deeps, and all the living beings that people them, and they answered me, We are not thy God, search higher than us. I asked the breath of the winds, and the air with all its inhabitants replied, Anaximenes was deceived, I am not God. I asked the heaven, the sun, the moon, and the stars, and they responded, Neither are we the God whom thou seekest. Finally, I addressed myself to all those beings that surround my physical senses, and I said to them, Since you are not my God, at least teach me something about Him; and they all cried with a loud voice, It is He who hath made us.'[2] Augustine applies the same question to himself considered as soul and body. The soul, as immaterial, he finds most capable of acquainting him with the nature of a spiritual God; still neither can do much more than reiterate the answer already received. Both nature and humanity are in fact the passive objects of Divine omnipotence; nevertheless, in theory he is not unmindful that God's attributes of supreme power and authority must be limited by His moral qualities, though in practice this limitation cannot be said to be of much value, for the reason that man's powers are so degraded

Deus, a quo dissonantia usque in extremum nulla est, cum deteriora melioribus concinunt. Deus quem amat omne quod potest amare sive sciens, sive nesciens—Deus in quo sunt omnia, cui tamen universæ creaturæ, nec turpitudo turpis est, nec malitia nocet, nec error errat . . . Deus pater veritatis, pater sapientiæ, pater veræ summæque vitæ, pater beatitudinis, pater boni et pulchri, pater intelligibilis lucis, pater evigilationis atque illuminationis nostræ, pater pignoris quo admonemur redire ad te.'—*Solil.* lib. i. c. 2, *Op. om.* i. 355, 356.

[1] *De Civit.* lib. viii. c. 4.

[2] *Confess.* p. 172.

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and distorted that he can form no conception of God's moral attributes.[1]

From the very fact of His infinity, whether considered in itself or as expressed by the boundless variety of nature, combined also with the limited and fallible character of human conceptions, God can only be comprehensively defined in a series of antitheses. These occur repeatedly in Augustine's works, and are models of religious eloquence and impassioned feeling.[2]

As a general outcome of Augustine's *théodicée*, we may say that its chief characteristic is its combination of sublimity and versatility. This is the reason why religious thinkers of so many kinds, ranging from the freest of Free-thinkers to the narrowest of dogmatists, unite in appealing to Augustine. In truth, the theological fabric he has erected is not a temple to the one God, but a multitudinous Pantheon of divers and scarcely reconcilable deities. Here we have the merciful Father of all men revealed to us by Christ side by side with the arbitrary, bloodthirsty tyrant of Calvin. Here we have the supreme spirit in juxtaposition with a sensuous materialized God. Here we find the veiled shadowy deity of the mystic: here the many-membered variously dowered idol of the Pantheist: here the symbol of light and intellectualism adored by the rationalist: here the cosmic deity of the natural theologian. The Jehovah of the Hebrews, the Father of the Christians, even the deities of Greece and Rome in some of their manifestations are all fully represented, recognised, and worshipped in the Augustinian Pantheon. I do not of course dwell on this as a matter of reprehension. I have already pointed out that the multiplicity of Augustine's theological conceptions is only a natural result of his own many-sidedness, intellectually and spiritually, and an inevitable reflex of the manifold materials employed in their creation. Under the circumstances it is not wonderful that his conjectures

[1] This is one point, among several others, in which Augustine's opinions tend distinctly to Dualism, or Twofold Truth. The gulf that he places between God and man is too wide to be bridged over. Hence he says, on the one hand, that Christians do not 'worship a God who repents, who is envious, who suffers from defect, who is cruel, who finds pleasure in the blood of men or animals, who is pleased with vices or crimes, or whose power is limited to a small corner of the earth' (*De Moribus Eccles. Cath.* i. c. 10), while on the other he is equally explicit in denying that man can have any idea of the moral attributes of the Deity, on account of the limitation and corruption of his faculties. Unfortunately for Christianity, it is on the latter horn of the dilemma that he allows himself to be impaled. Cf. Flottes, *Études*, p. 432.

[2] Comp. Nourisson, *Philosophie*, &c. i. 277.

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as to the Divine nature and attributes are interspersed by salutary reflections as to the impossibility of knowledge of such matters, though on ethical matters he carries the tendency too far. Our truest knowledge of God is confessed nescience, and our worthiest expression of our knowledge is silence. 'God is conceived more truly than defined, and He is truer than we are able to conceive Him.' The idea of God cannot be brought under any category, and no designation that we can employ is properly applicable to Him. In a word, all Augustine's *théodicée* is reduced ultimately to the knowledge of his ignorance of God. Still he does not maintain that God's incomprehensibility dispenses with all research into His nature on our parts. With a reminiscence of his Academic Skepticism he says that continual search if properly directed will bring new light, and a negative result if duly attained will be better than a positive one which may be erroneous.

But while Augustine's doctrine of God regarded in Himself, *i.e.* in His own being and attributes, deserves in many respects cordial recognition for breadth of view and fulness of treatment, his doctrine of man, or rather God's dealings with man, cannot be approved by any thinker who has a regard for justice and humanity. No doubt there is a point of view from which Augustine's conceptions on this point are justifiable; he was much too severe a logician to propound any conclusion or doctrine not based, as he thought, on sufficient premisses, whether originating in his imagination or engendered by his conception of the Christian revelation, or produced by the operation of the former on the latter. His doctrine of man is a consistent outcome of his excessive estimate of the Divine omnipotence. This he interpreted in such a manner as to deprive it of all conditions, and therefore of all morality. The Divine volition also he regarded as so immeasurably superior to all other subordinate wills as to be in reality irresponsible. He either did not see, or probably he failed to appreciate, the truth, that power unbounded by considerations of justice, mercy, and goodness is certainly arbitrary, and may well be malificent in its operations, so that instead of being obligatory on every thinking man it may justly rouse his indignation and excite him to resistance. Hence, according to Augustine's theory, God becomes a despot and tyrant—a horrible kind of Divine Nero or Louis XIV.—insisting on the fulfilment of his behests without the least regard to their injustice or the misery they may produce. On the other hand, man becomes the helpless victim of a caprice which is the more unjustifiable as it is connected with supreme omnipotence. He is a slave, with the added refinement of cruelty

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that his slavery is not only not of his choice, but that no efforts on his part can in the least modify his *status*. By an arbitrary decree he is deprived of every ability and power, not only for knowledge, but even for action. The liberty he apparently possesses is a figment and pretence, like the gilding of chains which, though they appear ornamental, confine the movements of the wearer just as effectually as if made of coarse iron. It merely consists of the freedom of fulfilling the destiny worked out for him, and which under no circumstances would it be possible to evade.

But while on the Divine side Augustine deliberately sacrifices human liberty to God's foreknowledge on the human side, it is still more effectually abrogated by his interpretation of the Fall of Man. One cannot help wishing that Augustine had employed the allegorical method which he found so useful in interpreting other of the Bible narratives to the records of that event. As it is, he construes it in such a manner as to involve the moral attributes of the Deity, the laws of the universe, and the welfare of humanity in one common and irreparable ruin. By the disobedience of its ancestor the majority of the whole human race has become totally incapacitated for knowing or doing what is right and good. The faculties of every man, both of soul and body, have become perverted and misleading. It is needless to dwell on the theological aspects of this momentous doctrine; our present concern is with its philosophical bearings. We here see, as I have already suggested, the Augustinian theology in intimate relationship with Skepticism. With one voice the Greek Skeptics had declared the senses to be untrustworthy, the reason to be perverted, all the natural powers of man to be insufficient to attain knowledge, and precisely the same conclusions were arrived at by Augustine with the portentous extension of the incapacity to all right and good action. The latter fact renders, in my opinion, Augustine's theological Skepticism much more mischievous than any amount of mere speculative theoretical unbelief could possibly have been. Like the man in the gospel, the elimination of one evil spirit only made ready a swept and garnished abode for the reception of seven others 'more wicked than himself.' That man with all his efforts is unable to attain truth may conceivably be an unavoidable necessity of the only possible *modus operandi* of his faculties, and therefore the fact may not in the least detract from the beneficence of his Creator; but the moment we make his creation and fall, and perhaps his consequent eternal misery, indissoluble parts of

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the original intention of Omnipotence concerning him, that moment God is shorn of His attributes of goodness, man becomes the hapless victim of a caprice as unreasonable as it is irresistible, and the creation, so far as the majority of human beings is concerned, is a stupendous act of despotism and cruelty.

Nor is it difficult to trace the motive-influences which induced in Augustine this pernicious excess of dogma. The outcome was natural to a fervid rhetorician borne along on the wings of imagination. Those elements of Christianity which might have impeded his progress in this headlong career, viz. the humane spirit and simple character of the teachings of Christ, were perfectly unheeded. Augustine, like too many of his congeners, was more struck with the superstructure than with the foundation of Christianity. He paid more regard to the Church of the fourth century than to the Christ of the Gospels.[1] His evidence of Christianity, as I have remarked, was less its own inherent truth than the political and material prestige it had (I had almost said accidentally) acquired by its incorporation into the Roman Empire. The facts of the gospel were hence not Christianity. The teachings of the Founder were not enough to guide men to salvation. They merely supplied the rough unhewn materials with which Christian theology had to be erected. and which apparently had first to be manipulated, and afterwards selected or rejected according to the caprice of the builder. Instead of being the completed history, they were only *mémoirs pour servir*. To Augustine as to Calvin the majority of the teachings of Christ—the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables—were not only superfluous, they were absolutely embarrassing. They imported into their neatly constructed scheme not a few discordant elements in the shape of insistency on Divine love, the perfect impartiality of God, the rights of humanity and

[1] Compare, on this subject, the excellent remarks of Neander (*Church History*, Bohn's translation, iii. p. 510): 'It is necessary to add here . . . that Augustine assumed, as that on which faith must fix, and from which it must take its departure, *everything given in the tradition of the Church*; hence he was led to admit into his *ratio* many foreign elements, as though they were given by *fides*, and his well-exercised, speculative, and dialectic intellect made it easy for him to find reasons for everything—to construe as necessary everything which had once become fused, although originally composed of heterogeneous elements, with his life of faith. His system of faith wanted that historical and critical direction whereby alone, returning back, at all periods of time, to the pure and original fountain of Christianity, it could *make* and *preserve* itself free from the foreign elements which continually threaten to mix in with the current of impure temporal tradition.'

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the human conscience with which they would gladly have dispensed. Augustine, *e.g.* can only reconcile Christ's behaviour to little children with his own opinions as to their terrible destiny if unbaptized by the most transparent perversion of the text.[1] A few of the chapters in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans served them as the only basis for their scheme of Christianity. To this foundation Augustine applied his powerful imagination—feelings and expressions which his calling of rhetor always kept at a boiling-point of excitation—together with his irresistible dialectic which crushed whatever opposed its progress, and hence deduced that system which has, to the misfortune of Christianity, occupied so high a place in its after-history. This leads me to note that there is in intellectual as in physical and organic processes a curious principle of compensation. The tendency repressed in one direction immediately seeks to make its way in another, doubtless in that of 'least resistance.' The curtailment of an organ or the diminution of its functional activity is supplemented as regards mental faculties, as well as physical tissues, by an addition to its volume or increase of its energy in some other manner. Augustine had long been a teacher of logic. Dialectical processes were his customary verifying tools. These he had no doubt employed in the region both of imagination and reason. Perhaps the dialectic of the latter may have been used in modifying the natural excesses of the former. On his reception of Christianity authoritative Revelation became the substitute for reason. There was no further room for purely rationalistic logic. His dialectic was therefore transferred to the region of imagination, and assumed by its transference a double force and activity. Augustine was hardly conscious of the change on account of the common tendency of such transcendental logic to counterfeit the ratiocinative processes of the intellect, and simulate the validity of their conclusions. For this reason neither Augustine nor others who have allowed themselves to be thus beguiled have probably ever realized the undemonstrable character of their conclusions. The speculative theologian, like the poet and the mystic, does not readily brook what seems an arbitrary limitation to his aërial flight, and scorns not only the caution of the rationalist and the doubt of the Skeptic,

[1] The reason why Christ blessed little children, and said, 'Of such is the kingdom of God,' as *revealed* by Augustine, was that He regarded their tender age as a *symbol* of humility! ('quod humilitatis similitudinem in parva ætate posuerit')—*De Peccat. Remissione*, i. c. 19. Compare *Confess.* i. xix. p. 16.

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but even the reverent awe of the Pietist and the benevolent feelings of the humanitarian. Mounted on the daring Pegasus of his own imagination, sustained and directed in his flight by a few texts of St. Paul, Augustine proceeds on his course, little recking the goal to which he himself was impelled, and to which those who pin their faith in him or his method will also be urged. On the recondite problems of the Being and attributes of God, the origin and destiny of man, he takes his stand on certain principles, and thence proceeds to deduce one marvellous conclusion after another, without dreaming of stopping to verify any single one of the successive stages of his argument. It is nothing to him if the final conclusion of his ratiocination conflicts with elementary notions of God as a moral Being and with our conceptions of His attributes. It is nothing to him if his scheme of Divine Providence robs God of His goodness and man of his liberty. It is nothing to him if the government of the universe is consigned to a tyrant, only differing from the worst of earthly despots in that his malificent power is infinitely greater. It matters not to him that his proposed disentanglement of human affairs has only added immeasurably to their original perplexity. He clearly considers that his province is not to satisfy the incompatible wishes and expectations of the crowd who watch his logical flight. All he has to do is to pursue undeviatingly his own course. Like Berengarius, perhaps he is persuaded that 'God is a dialectician,'[1] and hence is inclined to regard his own ratiocination as a copy of the thought-evolution he assumes to have taken place in the Divine mind. At least, he is too convinced of his own infallibility to listen to any such suggestion as that the subjective operations of his *individual* reason do not necessarily lead to all truth. He would no doubt have disputed the still more radical objection that all purely dialectical methods, even when they start from intellectual and rational principles, generally end in negation.

Sainte Beuve has remarked[2] that Augustine 'perfected the method of reasoning by imagination.' If by perfection he meant the highest conceivable limit to which a given tendency may be carried, this is doubtless true. Augustine's is the perfection of excess—devout imagination *in excelsis*—transcendentalism rampant—pious logic carried to the very sublimity of extravagance. But it certainly is not the perfection which consists in the recognition of the *modus in rebus*, it is not the perfection of reverent

[1] See Ampère, *Hist. Lit. de la France*, vol. iii. p. 333.

[2] *Port. Royal*, ii. 384, note.

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caution, calm wisdom, and restrained passion. The worst of it was that this reliance on dialectical methods in the region of intuition and religious sentiment was calculated to deceive not only Augustine but many of his disciples, who were so taken by the form of his teachings as to be careless of their matter. It is only by bearing this in mind that we are able to account for the prodigious influence exercised by Augustinianism, especially after its intensification by Calvin. Men of sober intellects, devout feelings, and warm human sympathies would never have surrendered themselves so completely to the merciless doctrines of Augustine had they not been beguiled by the seductive glamour of his dialectic. The consequences for after-Christianity were nothing less than disastrous. On how many noble intellects has the remorseless logic of men like Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, &c. weighed like a dismal and oppressive nightmare they have utterly been unable to throw off? For how many has the Augustinian ideal of deity spread a dark veil over the heavens and intercepted the natural trust of the creature in the goodness of the all-wise Father? How many has his representation of earth and creation filled with despair for the destiny of humanity? To how many ingenuous thinkers has his description of heathen virtues as 'splendid vices'[1] revealed the customary arrogance and exclusiveness of religious dogmatism while disclosing in his own case a fundamental incapacity for true ethical perception? How many have involuntarily shuddered at the cold-blooded sentence which would fain have consigned innocent children to endless torments for a mere ritual privation of dying unbaptized?[2] How many have exclaimed, either tacitly or openly, at the perversion of Divine Providence involved in making the narrow limits of the Christian Church the

[1] Of this marvellous opinion Liebnitz says, briefly but needlessly: 'Nec in Sacris Pandectis fundamentum habet, et rationi adversatur.'—*Op. Dutens*, i. p. 322.

[2] It was entirely owing to Augustine's influence that the Council of Carthage, in 418, finally condemned the doctrine of a 'limbus infantum,' or infant purgatory—like the first circle in Dante's *Inferno*—which the theologians of a preceding age had devised to escape the alternative of attributing to the Divine Being the obvious injustice of sentencing children to endless infernal torments. Augustine, however, 'Durus pater infantum,' disdained to be influenced by feelings of maudlin pity for the hapless babes. He insisted upon their sentence to hell, and upon their actual torture! It were to be wished that the inhuman and unchristian prescription—itself a relic of Augustinianism, which forbids a clergyman to read the Burial Service over an unbaptized infant—might, in this enlightened nineteenth century, be finally and speedily abrogated. [These words were written in 1876. The Burial Bill of 1880 is a partial response to this wish.]

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sole boundary of truth? What holocausts of martyrs and confessors have suffered from the unwarranted divorce of liberty of conscience from Christianity? What disasters have followed on the heels of the maxim, as impudently mendacious as atrociously cruel, 'Extra ecclesiam nulla salus'? No doubt there are few evil influences dominant in nature or history which are absolutely devoid of all utility, and Augustinianism may so far boast of conferring a residuum of indirect advantage on humanity. 1. Its numberless perversities and immoralities have taught mankind the lesson, though acquired at terrible cost, of the extreme lengths to which religious dogma is capable of proceeding. Taken in connection with other similar extravagances, they serve to show that there is no truth so unquestionable that dogma may not for its own interests trample it under foot; that no feelings or instincts are so sacred that it will not endeavour to pervert or crush them; that no beliefs are so improbable, no action so detestable, that it may not find a method of consecrating them. We shall have ample opportunities during our Skeptical enterprise of marking some of the many cruel deeds and portentous misbeliefs which Christian dogma of different kinds has sanctioned, and not a few of these are owing to the fanaticism and hierarchical pride of the Bishop of Hippo. 2. A second and incidental advantage greatly overrated by thinkers of the Augustinian type has been the suitability of his dogmatic scheme for certain persons of peculiar, to my mind diseased, sensibilities and temperaments, men, *e.g.* of despotic instincts and of hard unsympathetic feeling.[1] Because it was the chief agency in the evolution, *e.g.* of Cromwell and his Ironsides, or because it contributed to form such ornaments of the human species as Knox, Edwards, Baxter, Whitfield, its influence is assumed to have been on the whole beneficial to Christian humanity. For my part, I am Skeptic enough to believe that there are no religious or political systems so inherently false or mischievous as not to be adapted for some few among the numberless varieties of human idiosyncrasies that exist. In my professional experience I have known persons so anomalously organized as to thrive vigorously in hygienic conditions that would have proved fatal to ordinary healthy constitutions. It is no plea for the merits of Augustinianism—indeed it constitutes its sufficing

[1] Grotius well contrasts the characters evolved respectively by the creeds of Melancthon and Calvin: '*Melanchthonis* ac Johannis *Arndi* discipulos ferme videas bonos ac lenes: contra *Calvini* asperos, et tales qualem in maximam partem humani generis Deum esse sibi imaginantur. Tantum refert quo utaris doctore.'

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condemnation—that it is a scheme for the eccentric few rather than for the normally formed many—for those who are so infatuated by the idea of overmastering law and force as to be willing to sacrifice human liberty at its shrine. A parallel to the argument would be a proposal to assimilate the ordinary life and usages of a free and rational community to those which exist inside a lunatic asylum or a prison. Happily it could only emanate from one who merited the judicious restraint of the former institution, or, if he attempted to carry it into practice, who deserved the penal treatment of the latter.

But it was not only on the history of the after-Church that Augustine exercised a baneful influence. A marked feature in his career is the gradual deterioration of character that progressed step by step with his dogmatic development. The certainty he had conceived himself to have attained in Christianity became towards the end of his life a harsh, narrow, exclusive feeling, which found expression in arbitrary and intolerant words and acts. Paradoxical as it may sound, it is none the less true that Augustine, the Academic Skeptic, was nearer to genuine Christianity than the aged Bishop of Hippo. In his former condition he was compelled by his very uncertainty of truth to cherish an eclectic sympathy for the various opinions with which he came in contact, which must have borne some affinity to tolerance and therefore to charity; while he unhappily found but scant room for these sentiments in his later years. Augustine is in this respect a type of a large number of thinkers, philosophical and scientific as well as religious, who suffer from chronic dogma-induration. As an endemic we find this complaint not uncommon in societies both ecclesiastical and other, and its symptoms are the same as in an individual case. It is a mental disease of the same kind as the physical ossification of some of the vital organs. In many respects it is even worse than its corporeal analogue, for the dogma-induration of the intellect invariably entails a corresponding petrifaction of the feelings. I have often thought that if mental and emotional processes induced naturally and inevitably a similar condition of the physical organs wherein we generally localize them, and if they could be made the objects of dissection, what ossified brains, callosed sympathies, and petrified hearts would an autopsy of such men as Torquemada, Hildebrand, and other inhuman tyrants and persecutors reveal. Among these victims of 'dogma-induration' must undoubtedly be classed the name of Augustine, not that he is in act the parallel of those monsters, but his principles are so formed, enunciated, and defended as in reality

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to sanction their worse deeds. The difference between the Bishop of Hippo and the worst persecutors who have disgraced the name of Christianity is that which exists between any legislature and the executive power which carries the law into effect. The principles of Augustine are amply sufficient to establish the most exorbitant claims, and to justify the most atrocious acts that religious dogma in its worst form has ever put forward or perpetrated.

The consecutive stages of Augustine's 'dogma-induration' are marked with much distinctness in his works.[1] Few thinkers owed more than he did to the masters of Greek philosophy, especially to Plato and his successors. When he became a Christian, the sense of this obligation, so far from being extinguished, was for the time enhanced by finding that Platonic idealism was a useful ally in the interpretation of the records and doctrines of his new creed. He admitted that the Platonists had discovered the true God. Indeed, he not unfrequently, both with regard to the Platonists and others, maintained the Catholic doctrine of 'virtual Christianity,' *i.e.* that all truth pertained to Christ, and possessed an inherent Christian sanctity of its own, whether He were openly or by name confessed or not. But as his conviction of the exclusive truth of the Church became strengthened, partly by his own increasing hierarchical pride and love of domination, partly by continual controversies with heresiarchs, Augustine's sympathies for his old Gentile teachers began to wax more and more faint, until he arrived at the conviction that all Gentile philosophers were enemies of the truth; that whatsoever seemed true in their writings was a fraudulent possession of which they might be as justly despoiled as the Egyptians were of their jewels by the chosen people;[2] that all that was meritorious in Plato was derived from the Bible; and that the very lowest and most ignorant Christian was superior to the greatest thinker of Greece. Nor is the change of sentiment less strongly marked in the case of contemporary sects. His nine years' association with the Manichæans might, one would have thought, have sufficed to insure consideration even for their errors, of which he had so long been a partaker. Indeed, on one occasion he professes his inability to be very wroth with men whose doctrines he had

[1] On the forcible contrast between the moderation of Augustine's earlier and the intolerance and fanaticism of his later views, comp. Ritter, *Gesch.* vi. 176, 177. The Abbé Flottes thinks that the change in Augustine's opinions on the subject of liberty of conscience took place about 404. *Études*, p. 411.

[2] *Confess.* p. 114. Comp. references in note *m*. Oxford translation.

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formerly shared;[1] but in his later writings he attacks the Manichæans with unrelenting animosity; imputes to them every conceivable sin, impiety, and blasphemy; calls their Bishop, Faustus of Mileve, to whose good qualities he had once borne ungrudging testimony, 'magnus laqueus Diaboli,' the great snare of the devil; and is unable to discern in their faith anything but a wanton and mischievous perversion of the truth. And if Augustine could thus treat his own former creed, he was hardly likely to be more charitable to other sectaries with whom he never had anything in common. Against the Pelagians, *e.g.* who tried to preserve human liberty and responsibility from the operation of a degrading fatalism, the Bishop of Hippo rages, with all the ruthless ferocity of a grand inquisitor. No method is too base and treacherous, no cruelty too revolting, to be employed against the pernicious heretics. All Christians are expressly enjoined to become spies on their neighbours in order to detect the least symptoms of departure from a dogma which had never been heard in the Christian Church prior to the time of Augustine. Nor is he a whit more lenient to other independent thinkers, as Arians and Donatists. To his eternal disgrace he not only abuses the latter with a pen dipped in the bitterest gall of dogma, but he actually approved the cruel edicts passed against them[2] by Constantine and Theodosius, which, with the laws of the latter emperor against the Priscillianists, constitute the earliest precedents for the suppression of heresy by the secular arm—'*stirps ac semen malorum omnium!*'—the malignant harvest of which we have not ceased to reap even in the present day. In a word, Augustine's principles towards the end of his life were marked by an intensity of intolerance, narrow-mindedness, and fanaticism which has rarely been equalled by the most cruel and unscrupulous dogmatist that ever existed. The lesson of his life is in one respect useful; it may exemplify for those who are willing to learn it the disastrous effects of excessive dogma-growth upon a mind and feelings not inherently incapable of wisdom and tolerance, common sense and Christian love. There are other aspects of Augustine's dogmatic development—his 'Soul's Tragedy,' as it may well be called. From the moment of his elevation to the Bishopric of Hippo[3] the externalities of the Christian

[1] *Contra Epistolam Manich.* c. iii.; *Op. om.* viii. 152: 'Ego autem . . . qui omnia illa figmenta et quæsivi curiose et adtente audivi et temere credidi . . . sævire in vos omnino non possum.' Comp. Beausobre, Liv. vi.

[2] *Op. om.* ii. 648.

[3] The effect of this social and ecclesiastical elevation in accelerating

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Church assume a profounder importance in his eyes. In proportion to the repression of liberty of conscience and human freedom becomes the exaltation of mere ritual acts. We need not ascribe to him any great influence in procuring the establishment of *ex opere operato* sacramentarian views. The history of the Church seems to show that both baptism and the Lord's Supper were already regarded as thaumaturgic rites and magical charms before the time of Augustine; but he certainly contributed to strengthen these opinions by his own superstitious and antichristian interpretation of sacramental efficacy.[1] There is also a marked growth in asceticism of a morbid and sickly kind, tending as much to an injudicious extreme in one direction as his licentious and immoral youth did in the opposite. Even in his methods of Bible interpretation we find the effects of 'dogma-induration.' From the moment when Ambrose's liberal culture suggested allegory as a convenient method of expounding the more difficult of Old Testament records to the end of his life, there is a downward progress in literalism and Bibliolatry. He finally becomes quite an adept in perverting the Bible text to hierarchical purposes, and his Biblical commentaries are a treasury of ecclesiastical exegesis, to the value of which succeeding dogmatists have not been blind.

A fanciful derivation of Augustine's name is 'Rem Christianam Auxit.' He increased Christian dogma. This is no doubt true. By his imaginative and metaphysical power, by unscrupulous dialectic, by a false conception of Church unity, and by hierarchical ambition, he contributed very largely to consolidate, though on unstable foundations, the enormous superstructure of ecclesiastical doctrine. If his own reckless impulsiveness made him an innovator in the field of Christian dogma, and his neologianism was frequently and with good reason made a charge against him [2]—this is no more than we might have expected from his mental constitution and temperament. Probably his perpetual controversies with sectaries

his intellectual and spiritual degeneration is pointed out by Ritter, *Gesch.* vi. pp. 174, 175. He refers to *Aug. Epist.* cxviii. *passim.*

[1] Neander (*Church History*, iv. 426, 427, Bohn) appears inclined to exaggerate the Protestant tendencies of Augustine's sacramental views. Undoubtedly there are passages in his works which make the efficacy of the sacrament dependent upon the faith of the recipient. But there are others in which the efficacy seems to be asserted unconditionally. If, on the one hand, his theory of grace inclined him to the former view, his ecclesiasticism and undoubted superstition would impel him towards the latter.

[2] Comp. *e.g.* M. Simon's *Histoire Critique*, &c., in which Augustine is proved, on several points, to have been the author of a new system.

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of various kinds helped to confirm tendencies sufficiently rooted in his own nature. What we must especially deprecate is that his development took, as I have remarked, a wrong direction. Instead of looking back to Christ and to the rights of human freedom and conscience which he proclaimed, Augustine looked forward to the portentous development of Romanism. His perverted ideal of Christianity was not the peasant prophet of Galilee, but Gregory VII. placing his feet on the necks of kings and princes, and impiously arrogating an empire, secular as well as spiritual, commensurate with the limits of the habitable globe.

We are now in a position to sum up: I. Augustine's Skepticism; II. his varied influence on the thought and history of the Christian Church.

I. As to the first, Augustine's intellectual unbelief while it lasted was characterized by a thoroughness and comprehensiveness which left little room for dogmatic conviction of any kind. Besides the teachings of the Academics and reliance on their 'probability,' he appealed also to himself for the grounds of truth and knowledge. Like his philosophical parallel, Descartes, Augustine deliberately scrutinized all his accumulated beliefs, and as deliberately rejected, or rather claimed the right of rejecting, each which could by any possibility be controverted. He penetrated to the inmost recesses of his being to discover a basis for truth that should be absolutely irrefragable. This he found where Descartes discovered it, in consciousness. The very faculty of thinking, or even doubting, presupposed the existence of thinker or doubter.[1] No legitimate Skepticism could assail that impregnable position. Starting from this point of unquestionable truth, he presently satisfied himself of the veracity of outward facts, of which his senses testifed, and also

[1] Comp. the dialogue between Reason and Augustine, *Solil.* lib. ii. c. 1, *Op. om.* i. p. 369:—

R. Tu qui vis te nosse, scis esse te?
A. Scio.
R. Unde scis?
A. Nescio.
R. Moveri te scis?
A. Nescio.
R. Cogitare te scis?
A. Scio.
R. Ergo verum est cogitare te?
A. Verum.

Compare the similar passages from other portions of his works collected by Ritter, *Geschichte*, vi. pp. 206, 207, note.

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of the deeper inner life of which his consciousness was the perpetual deliverance. Ultimately all truth, being borne witness to by consciousness, became identified with it. So he exclaims, 'Do not go out of yourself, retire within, it is in the interior of a man that Truth has her dwelling.'[1] The careful examination he thus instituted into the grounds of truth, whether internal or external, is shown in his very remarkable book the 'Soliloquies,'[2] which was written about the same time and is animated by the same spirit as his books against the Academics. The 'Soliloquies' show what Augustine's inner life was between his abjuration of Gentile philosophy and his reception into the Church. It reveals the continual struggles of passion and feeling, the action and reaction of reason and intellect, the mutual contention of different modes of thought derived respectively from Paganism and Christianity. With his final acceptance of Christianity and deliberate substitution of authority for reason, the appeal to consciousness as the highest tribunal of truth ceased, or at least it became virtually inoperative. In a nature so susceptible as his of extraneous influences, the plan could at no time have afforded much expectation of permanent advantage. We may remember that even Descartes, a man much less constitutionally impressionable than Augustine, carried his touchstone of consciousness with him but a short distance in his philosophical career. Indeed, both the theologian and the philosopher reared up their respective superstructures without much reference to their ostensible foundation. The systems of both present to me the appearance of an inverted cone.

But Augustine's philosophical Skepticism—his alliance with the Academics—constituted but a transient episode in his mental career. What I have termed his theological Skepticism—the exaggeration of human incapacity for action no less than for knowledge—exercised a very profound influence both on the philosophy and theology of subsequent times. Duly analyzed, this utter moral imbecility seems to me more unfounded in its ratiocination and debasing in its consequences than either the total suspense of Pyrrhonism or the probability of Academic Skepticism, so that Calvinism —the natural outgrowth of Augustinianism—has in my judgment done more mischief in the world than all the systems of Freethought put together. For the Skepticism of Pyrrhôn and Sextos was purely speculative, it professed to be engendered by theoretic

[1] 'Noli foras ire, in te ipsum redi, in interiore homine habitat veritas.' *De Vera Relig.* c. 72.

[2] *Opera omnia*, i. pp. 355–86.

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considerations and to lead up to theoretic conclusions. But Augustine and Calvin extended it to human practice. The extreme disciples of the former exclaimed, 'Truth is unattainable; why waste your strength in bootless speculation and profitless research? Believe, and do what seems most probable and necessary—what you see the majority of men about you believing and doing.' Unsatisfactory as these directions might be to some, they were surely preferable to the dark creed of Calvin, who in effect said, 'Goodness is by the immense majority of human beings quite unattainable. No human strength avails for the performance of a single good act or the enunciation of a single good word. Do as you like, your lot is fixed from all eternity. If you are elect, you attain heaven; if not, you are doomed to hell.' And the disastrous influence of the latter unbelief was increased by the facts that it included not only human power but Divine goodness in its deadly grasp, and that it was promulgated on a religious basis. The conviction of complete moral helplessness was attained not by human experience—at least that of the race—but was asserted as a sacred and infallible revelation; whereas the intellectual feebleness of the Greek Skeptic only claimed to be founded on a philosophical basis, and did not pretend to a religious sanction or an infallible source. Further, Greek Skepticism no doubt left even the existence of Deity a doubtful question; but even if it had claimed to demonstrate Atheism, its influence would have been less immoral than the Skepticism of Calvin, which was founded on a dogma of a deity more lawless and bloodthirsty than the idols of the most degraded species of humanity. An Atheism which allows free play for the moral instincts of humanity, which indeed are in the last resort irrepressible, is surely preferable to a theology which endeavours to stifle and trample them under foot.

The influence of Augustine, in harmony with his curiously composite nature and varied activities, is of a very diversified character. With all his celebrity, his sincere though narrow piety, his metaphysical power, the titles of 'Saint' and 'Blessed' commonly prefixed to his name, it is very questionable to me whether the good or ill he has effected in the world preponderates. Perhaps the truest verdict concerning him would be the suspensive judgment which Andrew Fairservice pronounced on Rob Roy—'There are some things o'er bad for blessing and o'er good for banning.' We have already noticed his influence in elaborating and consolidating the dogmatic system of the Church. This induced not only innovations of doctrine in case of specific dogmas, but a definite mechanical standpoint as well as a complex method

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of technicalities for all doctrines alike. To Augustine more than to any other Christian Father is Christian theology indebted for the numberless terms and endless definitions of which every Christian dogma has become the nucleus. It is generally assumed that Scholasticism began with Erigena. It appears to me that we have all that is most characteristic of its method and spirit in the works of Augustine.[1] There we certainly find the unlimited application of dialectics to theology, there we find its tendency to abtruse subtleties and refinements, there we have its endless terminology, its elaborate definitions, its unmeaning technicalities—the portentous seed, in short, which was destined in a few centuries to produce the copious harvest of scholastic jargon. So far as ecclesiastical Christianity is still suffering, as it undoubtedly is, from dogma-plethora, the needless complications, the self-evolved mysteries of sacerdotalism and excessive systematization—so far as our present-day terms and formulas are inherited, an *hereditas damnosa*, from Scholasticism, so far must we blame the too-subtle logic and the over-profound metaphysics of the Bishop of Hippo. Not that Augustine was completely devoid of all appreciation for simplicity in matters of religion, or that he was not sometimes weary of the perpetual argumentation in which he was involved. Like his disciple, Calvin, he had his 'lucid intervals'[2] of wisdom and Christian apperception. In one of his epistles he says that no disputations, philosophical writings, or political enactments, are to be compared to Christ's twofold injunction of love to God and man.[3] Unfortunately the 'lucid intervals'

[1] Bossuet has pointed out the influence of Augustine on Peter Lombard, and through him on the Schoolmen. *Défense de la Tradition*, &c. book v. chap. 24. Compare, also, Nourisson, vol. ii. p. 153, &c. On the Protestant side, Schröckh (*Christ. Kirchengesch.* Th. xv. p. 527) calls him 'Der Stifter der Scholastischen Theologie.'

[2] Some of Calvin's 'lucid intervals' are thus described in a note to Nichol's *Works of Arminius*, i. p. 663: '. . . It is a circumstance for congratulation that the invincible force of truth sometimes extorted from him (Calvin) a true expression.' In the confession which he wrote for the Italian Churches, and which was published in the year 1558, he declares 'that the Confession of Faith, which is comprised in the Apostles' Creed, ought to be sufficient for *all moderate Christians*!' In the first book of his *Institutes* (cap. xiii. 5) he extols St. Hilary, who, in a passage of his book on Councils, calls the French bishops *happy men*, 'because they had neither invented, received, nor had even known, any other confession than the ancient and very simple one which, from the time of the Apostles, had been received by all Churches.'—*Calvini Op. om.*, ed. Amstel. vol. ix. p. 25.

[3] *Epistolæ*, cxxxvii. cap. vii.: 'Quæ disputationes, quæ litteræ quorumlibet philosophorum, quæ leges quarumlibet civitatum duobus præceptis ex

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were only rare occurrences—peaceful and sacred interludes in the dogma-mania which became towards the end of his life part of his second nature.

Even more disastrous than his needless entanglement of Christian teaching was Augustine's influence on liberty of thought. He stands at the head of that loathsome band of bigots and persecutors who, in the name of the SON OF MAN, have outraged humanity. His works contain the whole iniquitous code of religious persecution as it has been defined and practised by its greatest proficient—I mean the Church of Rome. To him must be ascribed the first unhallowed attempt to coerce Christian Free-thought, and to repress liberty of conscience by physical force. He is the author of the wretched plea of the spiritual advantage of the persecuted.[1] He first suggested the mischievous perversion of the famous '*Compelle intrare*'[2]—'Compel them to come in.' To him must be attributed the application of Jewish massacres to sanction the extermination of Christian sectaries. He affords a precedent for the exaggeration of heretical opinions, and the intentional distortion of their obvious and natural implications. At his door, therefore, lies that heinous inversion of the humane spirit of the gospel, that detestable caricature of Deity, that substitution of speculative for ethical rectitude, that elementary maxim of religious persecutors—'the end sanctifies the means'—which have been plague spots on the history of the Christian Church. We cannot be surprised at the fell Nemesis which, following Augustine's teaching, has marked the course of that history with oppression and bloodshed. We cannot wonder that his precept and

quibus Christus dicit totam legem Prophetasque pendere, ullo modo sint comparandæ: "Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde, et ex tota anima tua, et ex tota mente tua, et diliges proximum tuum tanquam teipsum?" (Matt. xxii. 37, 39.) Hic physica . . . hic ethica . . . hic logica . . . hic etiam laudabilis reipublicæ salus.' Augustine is not less explicit in admitting the general recognition of these fundamental principles of Christianity: 'Et quis est quem lateant ista mandata? Nempe et omnibus fidelibus et plurimis infidelibus nota sunt.' (Serm. viii. in Ps. cxviii. *Op.* iv. 1294.) Nor does he underrate their importance and signification: 'Sed ne putetis hæc duo præcepta parva esse. In his duobus præceptis tota lex pendet et prophetæ. Quidquid ergo salubriter mente concipitur vel ore profertur, vel de qualibet divina pagina exculpitur non habet finem nisi caritatem.' (*Enarr. in Ps.* cxl. *Op.* iv. 1562.)

[1] 'Sicut est aliquando misericordia puniens, ita est crudelitas parcens.' *Epist.* cliii.

[2] See Bayle, *Œuv. Div.* ed. La Haye, vol. i. p. 174; and compare chapter on Bayle in this work.

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example were adduced by Calvin to justify the murder of Servetus,[1] that his name was employed to sanction the massacre of St. Bartholomew,[2] that his authority was invoked to countenance the revocation of the Edict of Nantes,[3] that his teachings inspired such bigots as Dominic and Torquemada, that his writings became the Bible of the Inquisition. Few indeed are the scenes of intolerance which stain the page of history and discredit the name of Christ which cannot claim the name or the teaching of the Bishop of Hippo to sanction their excesses.

Hardly less important, though happily less injurious, has been Augustine's influence in our own subject of Skepticism. His own studies in and high appreciation of Gentile wisdom, in the early part of his life, was regarded as a precedent for free-research by some who declined to concur in the altered estimate of those pursuits which belong to his declining years. They saw, what is indeed patent to every observer, that Augustine's wisdom was not the exclusive product of Christianity. The best and most durable portion of it was due to other sources. His depreciation of reason in order to magnify authority was a lesson in ecclesiastical Skepticism which was not lost on a goodly company of successors, of whom Pascal, Huet, Le-Vayer, may stand as types. I have already suggested Pascal as presenting a striking parallel to Augustine. What Academic Skepticism effected for the latter, the essays of Montaigne did for the former. Both ending in a kind of mystic Dogmatism, attained it by passing through a course of philosophical Free-thought. Other Skeptics, of whom two, Glanvill and Hirnhaim, are in our lists, saw clearly the legitimate issue of Augustine's doctrine of human depravity,[4] and deduced from it extreme Skeptical conclusions which we can hardly suppose he

[1] See the passages adduced by Calvin in his *Fidelis expositio errorum Michaelis Serveti*, *Op. om.* ed. Amstel. vol. viii. pp. 512, 513. Comp. Nourisson, *Philosophie*, &c. ii. p. 181.

[2] Nourisson, *Op. cit.* p. 185.

[3] 'Il est certain,' says Flottes, 'que les principes de Saint Augustin justifiaient pleinement cette révocation de l'édit de Nantes, dont le prudent évêque d'Avranches, Daniel Huet, n'a pas craint de dire qu'elle avait été un obstacle à la réunion des communions chrétiennes et une occasion de troubles civils.'—*Études*, p. 542. Cf. Nourisson, ii. p. 181.

[4] See chapters on Glanvill and Hirnhaim in this work, and, as to the latter Skeptic, comp. Barach, *Hieronymus Hirnhaim*, p. 64: 'Hirnhaim's Skepticismus und seine Polemik gegen alle auf menschliche Autorität gegründete Wissenschaft, gegen alle Philosophie und Theologie, ist die nothwendige Kehrseite dieser Augustinischen Lehre' (*i.e.* the Doctrine of Human Depravity).

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would willingly have sanctioned. A common characteristic of all the ecclesiastical and original-sin Skeptics, one moreover which they share with Hindu Negation, is the mysticism to which they tend, and by means of which they secure a dogmatic position as rigorous and as infallible as if their system were founded on a basis of unconditional knowledge. The common terminus of the religious mystic, as of the determined uninquiring dogmatist, is, 'Credo quia impossibile.'

II. This leads me to notice Augustine's influence on Christian mysticism. Not only was he led in the direction of intuitional assurance by his Skepticism, both Academic and Christian, but his own imaginative and emotional profundity pointed to the same goal. His exhortation to his hearers was continually, 'Believe; for what can you know?' The conviction he took from them by Skepticism and by the exaggeration of human impotence he attempted to restore by spiritual apperception and supernatural feeling. Hence his writings have been a storehouse of devout imaginings and tender emotions, of which most Christian mystics have freely made use. But no mysticism can exist without an individualism of a marked type, and it is one of many incongruities in Augustine's system that, side by side with the autocratic claims of the Christian community, are the rights of the individual man as standing in a direct and immediate relation to God. Doubtless in his own case as in others, mysticism served to intensify his bigotry and intolerance. It partook of the harshness of St. Bernard rather than the tender quietism and sympathetic gentleness of Madame Guyon and Fénelon. In his treatise *De Vita Beata*, which is a kind of postscript to his books against the Academics, he proclaims God as the Eternal Certainty he had failed to discover in the systems of philosophers—the ultimate fact of the world without, as consciousness is the final truth of the world within. This absolute verity he embraced with a passionate enthusiasm which permitted no intercepting influence of any kind. The defects of the reason were to be compensated by the passionate certitude of the feeling. God was not meant to be known but only to be felt, and in proportion to the increase of this feeling in fulness and intensity was the spiritual advance of the Christian. His ideal of ultimate Christian perfection is becoming merged and lost in the Divine personality. 'God,' he says, 'must be loved in such a manner as to produce in us complete self-forgetfulness.'

This passion in its undue fervency unhappily exceeded its bounds. His own identification with the Deity, and his consequent zeal in His (supposed) cause, became the criterion of his estimate of

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other men, and the measure of the truth and value of their opinions. His opponents were God's opponents, his zeal against them was sublimated into a Divine and holy wrath. He attained finally that climax of passion—the incongruous mixture of love to God and malignity to man—of which we have an adumbration in the Psalms, while it formed a well-known principle of Hebrew political and religious life. 'Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against Thee? Yea, I hate them right sore even as though they were mine enemies.'

But allowing for the excess of a true principle, Augustine's mystic individualism operated beneficially in contributing to produce the Reformation. For in direct antagonism to his principles of sacerdotalism and ecclesiasticism are the independence and self-reliance, the sense of *personal* religion, which pertain to Protestantism. You will not need to be reminded how forcibly these principles were seized upon and applied by Luther, and in a somewhat different direction by Baius, Jansen, and Arnauld. So dangerous to the power of the Church were these aspects of Augustinian teaching that attempts were more than once made to dispute both his orthodoxy and authority, and in short to pull down his image from the lofty pedestal it had so long occupied.[1]

At the present day such an attempt is needless. M. Nourisson, in his learned 'Philosophie de Saint Augustin,'[2] with every inclination to prophesy nothing but good of the great Bishop of Hippo, is obliged to confess that his fame has fallen into discredit.[3] Nothing less could, indeed, have been expected from the general diffusion of culture and tolerance, and from the proportionate decrease both of dogmatic assurance and bitterness which on the whole are prevailing influences of our time. Even Romanists[4] of

[1] See, for example, the curious articles formulated against Augustine by the Spanish Jesuits in the seventeenth century, quoted by Nourisson, *Philosophie*, &c. ii. pp. 188, 189. It is impossible to withhold sympathy from a few of these articles. The 15th, *e.g.* runs thus: 'Augustin, comme couvert d'un nuage épais, n'a pas aperçu la vérité que les modernes ont trouvée.' The 17th is as follows: 'Ce n'est pas merveille que bien des gens jugent que les sentiments d'Augustin sont trop durs et indignes de la bonté de Dieu et de sa clémence.'

[2] *Philosophie*, &c. ii. 274.

[3] Nourisson, *Op. cit.* ii. p. 274.

[4] Compare Flottes, *Études*, 406–539. See also the article of M. Saint-René Taillandier, 'St. Augustin et la Liberté de Conscience,' *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xx. p. 503, &c. The concluding paragraph of this paper seems worth quoting: 'Ce n'est pas ici une question de parti; la con-

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high character and conspicuous ability now dissent from the intolerance which Augustine first preached and which their Church for so many centuries industriously practised. The 'dogma-induration' which Christian theology, especially in certain of its forms, derived from him is gradually undergoing a beneficial process of dissolution, like the ice of winter in the sunshine of spring. No longer do reasoning men believe in the celestial Moloch which the unrestrained imagination and imperious instincts of Augustine and Calvin conjured up. No longer do they suffer their consciences to be outraged by holding a gloomy fatalism which deprives them of their liberty and mocks at their persuasion of responsibility. No longer do they think that inherently virtuous actions can be essentially affected by the religious belief of the doer, and that all ethical excellence, unselfishness, generosity outside the limits of ecclesiastical Christianity, are only forms of vice. No longer can they accept or reconcile with the attributes of a moral Being the 'horrible decree' which consigns men and even innocent children to eternal torments for a fault committed centuries before their birth. . . . But even with these deductions of excessive dogma, Augustine must always possess considerable value as a metaphysical thinker, as a devout Pietist, and an eloquent Christian preacher. It is in the first of these capacities that his merit seems to me especially pre-eminent. The depth, keenness, subtlety, flexibility of his psychological introspection are truly marvellous. This characteristic, though common to all his writings, is an especial feature of his earlier works, which he wrote immediately before and directly after receiving Christian baptism. Not less conspicuous in this earlier

damnation de l'erreur de Saint Augustin ne doit pas être prononcée au nom de telle ou telle Église, mais au nom du Christianisme universel et de l'éternelle raison. On a reproché aux écrivains catholiques de n'avoir pas été assez prompts à désavouer les docteurs de l'intolérance. S'il a fallu pour les convaincre, les grandes épreuves de la révolution, ainsi que les vicissitudes de nos jours, n'oublions pas qu'ils ont réussi pourtant à se dégager de la tradition qui pesait sur eux. Leurs représentants les plus autorisés ont formulé sur ce point des déclarations définitives. Je ne parle pas seulement de M. Albert de Broglie, de M. l'Abbé Maret, du père Gratry, du sage auteur des *Études* sur Saint Augustin (l'Abbé Flottes), de bien d'autres encore : un homme qui, par l'âpreté de ses convictions et l'amertume de son langage, avait trop souvent pris plaisir à blesser le Christianisme naturel du genre humain, M. de Montalembert (*Les Moines d'Occident*, i. pp. 203, 204), a fini par repousser la tradition augustinienne de l'intolérance pour s'attacher aux premières doctrines de l'évêque d'Hippone, c'est-à-dire à la tradition de l'Evangile et des temps apostoliques.'

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portion of his Christian career, before dogma-degeneration of brain and heart set in with all its force, is his eager disinterested desire for truth. We have already noticed the comprehensive sympathy, the charity and tolerance, which distinguish him at the same period. In a word, what is permanently valuable in the Bishop of Hippo is his Free-thought rather than his dogmatic system—his philosophical more than his episcopal labours. For in the former he approaches nearly to the humane, gentle, and liberal teaching of Christ, while in the latter he is a primary promoter of the influence most opposed to it—a harsh, narrow, imperious, and cruel ecclesiasticism.

. . . . . .

ARUNDEL. Have you then really, Doctor, become Skeptical as to the advantages you are so ready to ascribe to Skepticism?

TREVOR. Not in the least—nor do I know what you mean.

ARUNDEL. You made, I think, Augustine's stress upon human weakness and imbecility a reminiscence of his Academic Skepticism.

TREVOR. I based it partly on that, and partly on the Pauline doctrine of original sin.

ARUNDEL. And yet you proceeded to point out the enormous mischief of Augustine and Calvin's practical Skepticism.

TREVOR. Certainly, for the reason that it was practical and founded on dogma. The Greek Skeptics, as we saw, did not really touch the question of ordinary human conduct, the suspense they advocated was in the domain of philosophical theory and speculation. But Augustine seriously propounded, not as a theory but as a positive indisputable fact, the utter helplessness of man in respect of action and practice. The former bid men distrust the absolute veracity of their senses and reason, the latter took away all power of self-movement. The one was a conscious imperfection in the performance of certain knowledge-functions, as, *e.g.* the senses, which could only have had the effect of inducing caution; the other was a complete paralysis of all the nervous centres.

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HARRINGTON. Calvin's moral Skepticism not only deprived man of his liberty, but it went further—it robbed God of His justice. I have frequently tried to conceive the Deity of Calvin and his followers, and the conception has been so completely divested of every ethical and noble attribute, of everything that would sanction human love and reverence, that rather than worship (love is out of the question) such a lawless despot, I would choose to become an Atheist; and, to use the well-known words of Mill, 'If such a Being could sentence me to hell for not worshipping Him, to hell I would go.'

ARUNDEL. I am no more an admirer of Calvin's Juggernaut than you are, and I agree with you in thinking that no Deity is better than one who violates all our moral sentiments, and tramples our best instincts under foot. Still, we should remember what Trevor only incidentally noticed, that there are many men so constituted as to reverence such an incarnation of tyrannical and irresponsible power. I do not speak of Mahometans, whose ideas of freedom are unhappily engendered by the despotisms under which so many of them live, but of countrymen of our own. Indeed, I am not certain whether the ultimate ground of our assertion of human liberty is not, after all, a pure categorical imperative —the decisive protest of the moral and spiritual sentiment against the unlimited extension of the iron chain of cause and effect which appears dominant in nature. For that matter, all the modern results of science point more and more in the direction of a rigid uniformity, which it is impossible to discriminate from fatalism; so that man's feeling of liberty threatens to become a small island in the infinite ocean of causation.

HARRINGTON. You might have added that under the influence of determinism and other philosophical forms of the theory of causation even the island is gradually disappearing—by scientific denudation, we might say—not that I think there is much danger of the feeling of liberty being altogether extirpated from the human consciousness. This is just one of those cases in which instincts, if not primordial, yet by culture and reflection forming part of the inherited

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mental possession of most civilized peoples, rise superior to all logic and science.

MISS LEYCESTER. The truth of your last remark and the non-truth of your observation that the island of human conscious freedom is disappearing are both confirmed by the fact that while fatalism in science is increasing, it is disappearing from theology, at least in modern Europe. Calvinism, if not extinct, is rapidly expiring, and I am told that Mahometan fatalism is abating somewhat of its vigour among those followers of the Prophet who are brought in contact with Western modes of thought. This would seem to show that the feeling of human liberty is gradually separating itself from ratiocinative and analogical proof, and is becoming—as Mr. Arundel suggested—a purely spontaneous though indestructible instinct.

HARRINGTON. Of course we must be aware, and be prepared to face the fact, that in subordinating Divine omnipotence to human instincts and feelings, instead of, as Augustine did, adopting the opposite course, we are greatly limiting the Divine freedom.

TREVOR. Undoubtedly God's omnipotence cannot, in any humane system of thought, claim to be unconditional. His power is bounded by absolute impossibilities in nature and the constitution of the universe, besides being self-limited by its own wisdom and goodness. It is important to preserve the moral attributes of the Deity at whatever sacrifice of the authoritative and magisterial—a fact theologians are apt to overlook. No external violence or polemic has done so much harm to ecclesiastical Christianity as its own persistent ascription to Deity of acts and feelings which would be rightly qualified as partial, unjust, jealous, or revengeful, if done by one man to another.

MISS LEYCESTER. I was never so profoundly convinced of the immorality of Calvinism as when, travelling in the Highlands some years ago, I heard a peasant woman gloating over the eternal torments of the non-elect in a future world. In order to impress her with the unworthy conception she had formed of God, I told her of a parent inclined to partiality in treating his children, but whose injustice was

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partly checked by the noble unselfish character of the boy he was disposed to pet, who, so far as he was able, refused on all occasions the indulgence that was not extended to his less-favoured brothers and sisters. The woman agreed that the father was wrong and the boy right, but failed to see that my argument would apply to God's dealings with men.

TREVOR. Human nature, you see, stronger than theological dogma!

HARRINGTON. Nay, Doctor! Theological dogma, triumphing over human nature! or rather perhaps an example of Twofold Truth—acknowledged injustice on the part of the earthly parent ascribed without scruple to the Father of mankind.

MISS LEYCESTER. But why should our human instincts and feelings so continually come in conflict with dogma?

HARRINGTON. Simply because men will rather trust *ab extra* definitions than rely upon the safer guidance of their own unbiassed and enlightened conscience.

MRS. HARRINGTON. But what, on the other hand, is to be said of the acknowledged impropriety of the finite judging the infinite?

TREVOR. That it is in its common acceptation one of those theological hobgoblins that have been set up to frighten thinking people out of their reason. It is just 'the right divine of kings to govern wrong' transferred from earth to heaven, from the finite to the infinite, and acquiring in the transition an appropriate infinity of criminality. No such abstraction as eternal, infinite, &c. can justify the slightest deviation on the part of a moral being from the obvious dictates of justice and goodness. The laws of morality have an existence more inherently eternal and infinite than can be conceived to pertain to any entity whatever. Hence when we estimate actions attributed to God from an ethical standpoint, it is not the finite judging the infinite, but one infinite judging the other—the infinity of truth, righteousness, and goodness, estimating the infinite of personal Deity. Of course I speak of ideal rather than actual priority.

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HARRINGTON. I heartily concur with your assertion of 'eternal and immutable morality.' Augustine's ethical teaching, like his life, is not of the most satisfactory kind. Perhaps he adopted St. Paul's notion that ethical demerit is created by prohibition or penal law, and hence like so many other theologians regarded it as the contravention of an arbitrary command. But it is to me most certain that this purely theological conception of sin has operated mischievously both in Romanism and extreme Anglicanism. It has induced, *e.g.* a complete severance between Divine and human law, so that a transgression of the latter, even when most self-evident and obligatory, may not constitute sin, *i.e.* the contravention of the former. Hence we have J. H. Newman, in his 'Grammar of Assent,' saying, 'We have no remorse or compunction in breaking . . . mere human law.' The true philosophical idea of guilt is that of the old Stoics, viz. what is inherently and of itself evil, irrespective of prohibition or punishment whether human or Divine.

ARUNDEL. I was sorry to find, Doctor, that you did not place that value on Augustine's 'City of God' which I believe it deserves. Indeed, your remarks upon it appeared to me pervaded by a misconception. You considered it as a kind of map or plan of ecclesiastical conquest and aggrandisement to be interpreted prospectively by the extravagant claims of the Papacy under Gregory VII. or Boniface VIII. In my opinion we should regard it as a masterly effort of Christian imagination to construct out of such materials as were then available a comprehensive scheme of the Divine government of the world. It is a kind of prose-poem, and may be compared with the 'Paradise Lost.' I do not suppose either Augustine or Milton would have us take each incident or detail of their productions as veritable facts, or intended us to read their works as we should a book of history or science.

TREVOR. From that point of view I have no objection to allow the 'De Civitate' a high place among the magnificent dreams of Christian Utopia-founders, though I cannot help thinking that is not the meaning generally accorded to it. Indeed, I much doubt whether either Augustine or Milton

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would have been satisfied with the relegation of their work to the domain of pure imagination. In both cases the outline is not merely dogmatic, but passionately and extravagantly so.

HARRINGTON. While I quite think that the dogmatic development of Christianity has been excessive, perhaps something may be allowed—(1) for the need of free-play for the constructive elements in its composition; (2) for the effect of that elaboration and consolidation on different departments of human knowledge and activity. You remember, I dare say, that rather rhetorical passage of 'La Génie du Christianisme' in which Chateaubriand enumerates all the magnificent achievements in architecture, painting, music, and literature which he says are owing to the inspiration and patronage of the Latin Church. The passage, I am aware, will not bear analysis, but something is to be said for that variedly cultured evolution of Christianity which necessarily accompanies, even if it is not the effect of, the higher stages of civilization. Of course the assumption among religious developmentists is that we cannot have the artistic and literary progress without an increased complication of creeds and dogmas, but to that I distinctly demur. The regions of pure sentiment and of intellectual conviction, though not altogether apart, are still so far distinct that the feelings which operate in the one may have no great effect on the other. When, *e.g.* I go to Salisbury or any other cathedral, the conviction I have of the imaginative power of the architect and the grandeur of his conceptions, or the beauty of Handel or Mozart's music, is of altogether a different kind from the belief or perhaps unbelief with which I follow the Athanasian Creed, or listen to some preposterous doctrinal discourse from the pulpit.

MISS LEYCESTER. But you see, Charles, it is not every one that has the power or the inclination to discriminate between sentimental and intellectual convictions. Not a few of my own sex would, *e.g.* deliberately infer the truth of the Creed or the doctrine, from the magnificence of the building in which they heard it or the grandeur of the music employed as its exponent.

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TREVOR. Chateaubriand's 'Genius of Christianity' is not the genius of Jesus of Nazareth, but of mediæval Romanism. There can be no intrinsic and inevitable connection between a form of worship and a style of architecture. The laws that ultimately determine architectural development are the climatic and other conditions of the peoples who adopt them, and there would be no inherent absurdity, so far as I see, in the celebration of any religious or, for that matter, any solemn secular act in a Gothic Cathedral. Indeed, the very fact that mediæval cathedrals are found to administer to the religious sensibilities of Protestants of various sects, and to modes of worship of different degrees of simplicity, as well as to the ornate services for which they were originally built, tends to show that they are capable of harmonizing with more than one form of worship. . . . Moreover, it is a mistake, and a mischievous one, to allow admiration for the imposing features of any despotism, ecclesiastical or secular, to overpower the consideration of its service to humanity in general. Take, *e.g.* the splendour of the court of Louis XIV., and the magnificent array of talent, literary and artistic, that surrounded it, and contrast that grandeur and culture with the miserable condition of the French people: they are only the gay trappings which adorn a corpse, and serve to hide the traces of incipient corruption.

MRS. HARRINGTON. I do not presume to make my own feelings a criterion of those of others, but I find that the need of simplicity of worship is in direct proportion to the reverential awe or impressive solemnity which engenders it. Nothing in art is so sublimely imposing as some of the grander aspects of nature. The most solemn and awe-inspiring temple in the world is the contemplation of the star-lit heavens on a summer's night from some commanding position, or, as I saw it on one occasion, from the deck of a yacht in the Mediterranean. On such occasions simplicity of worship, even to the extent of speechless adoration, seems infinitely more becoming than an elaborate ritual. Hence I should say the simpler the worship of the infinite the better.

MISS LEYCESTER. In his elaboration of Christian dogma,

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both in the 'De Civitate' and afterwards, Augustine seems to me to have made a stupendous mistake; for, intending to build a cathedral *ad majorem gloriam Dei*, what he really did was to erect on the lines of the proposed edifice a huge and elaborate dungeon; and we might feel enamoured of the imposing elevation, the substantial masonry, the profuse ornamentation, the wonderful uniformity of the gigantic structure, if we could only forget the numerous dark cells within, or shut our ears to the groans of so many hundreds of our fellow-men imprisoned in them by the arbitrary fiat of a cruel Deity.

ARUNDEL. I think we are unanimous as to Augustine's excesses. At the same time, the 'dogma-induration' from which he suffered is not a purely theological epidemic.

TREVOR. Of course not: we have it in philosophy and physical science—in fact, it is the common exaggeration of every supposed knowledge, for which Skepticism is the appropriate remedy.

HARRINGTON. Perhaps so, within due limits; but undue Skepticism is itself a disease—a kind of atrophy or consumption, for which a certain measure of dogmatic induration would be beneficial.

ARUNDEL. It is because I feel that, that I am unable to coincide in Trevor's animadversions of Augustine's induration, though I think it was carried too far. The assumption underlying his remarks was that the process in itself was wrong: that a man ought to pass the whole of his life like an intellectual pendulum—oscillating between two extremes. Surely the more natural conception of intellectual growth is that it is an advance in certitude and assurance.

TREVOR. Well, for my part I should be glad of a philosophical reason why certitude should grow with age, and dogma-induration be the intellectual concomitant of grey hair. On some points, no doubt, age confers experience, *e.g.* in the practical concerns of life; but I cannot see that it renders the problems of the universe less puzzling than they were wont to be. Possibly one reason for thinking otherwise may be that we unconsciously transfer our enlarged experience of men and of social existence to the region of philosophical

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speculation, where it has no right. Induration implies diminution, ossification of tissue is also a lessening of its actual bulk, and a dogmatist must *ex vi termini* be narrow-minded. Now all great minds, so far from becoming narrower with age, ought to expand. Take Goethe, *e.g.* His intellect never ceased to be, if not excessive, at least strongly impressionable. A Chinese philosopher said that 'he is a great man who never loses his child's heart.' Augustine certainly lost it; it either became petrified, or perhaps it was lost (no uncommon casualty) in the folds of his episcopal vestments.

HARRINGTON. Excuse me, Doctor, but I think you have been raising a false issue. The problems of the world do not, of course, lose their inscrutability because we get older, but it is we who, after patient research, arrive at certain convictions respecting them. It may be that our final conclusions are only acquiescence in enforced nescience, but mature years confirm this persuasion, whereas in youth we are not always satisfied with it.

TREVOR. Of course if grey hairs bring a feeling of ignorance and suspense, they confer wisdom. I was rather speaking of those who, in course of years, become capable in their own estimation of pronouncing *ex cathedrâ* on every conceivable subject of human investigation.

ARUNDEL. Your final doubt as to whether Augustine's merits or defects preponderate is not unworthy of a Skeptic, but I suspect you would not find many students of Augustine who would agree with you. With all deductions on account of his intolerance, the benefits he has conferred upon Christianity by stimulating Christian life and spiritual growth greatly exceed the ill-effect of his harshness, which was probably only temporary.

MISS LEYCESTER. I cannot at all agree with you, Mr. Arundel. I object to allowing religious emotion to override moral or human perception, or to devout and holy words being accepted as a substitute for evil selfish acts. I have heard of an old woman who, when told that the best Psalms were written by David, said she wished she had never known it; and being asked the reason, replied that she could never read them without thinking of poor Uriah deserted by his

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comrades in the forefront of the battle. Similarly I object to Augustine's 'Confessions' or his 'City of God' being offered as a compensation in full for the mischief caused by his cruel dogmas and his inhuman perversion of Christianity. I also object to Calvin's 'Institutes' or any practical good he may have accomplished being proffered as a sufficing apology to outraged humanity for the murder of Servetus. Acts, in all such cases, seem to me of infinitely more importance than words and dexterously constructed systems. Nor do I entertain any doubt that the repulsion produced in some minds and the doubt evoked in others by deeds and dogmas irreconcilable with the first principles of justice and charity, have been more baneful to humanity than the pious thoughts, the imaginative rhetoric, or the exaltation of devout feelings oftentimes associated with them, have been beneficial.

HARRINGTON. I quite agree with you, Florence. Religious orthodoxy, so called, has much sentimentality of a sickly sort to answer for. The primary criterion of Christianity is, *Christo teste*, a moral one—righteousness to man consecrated as duty to a righteous God. The aftermath of religion, *e.g.* elevated sentiment, profound feeling, devotional excitement, mystical rapture, occupy only a subordinate position in the true estimate of a man's character. Nevertheless, we must not suppose that all persons feel alike on this subject. Some people seem to me devoid of spontaneous ethical perception, just as there are persons insensible to musical notes, or who suffer from colour-blindness; but they are still capable of having their religious or moral pulse quickened by reading works of devotion, or surrounding themselves with sensuous accessories. In such cases, religious sentiment seems a compensation for the absence of ethical perception, and often subserves, though I should say imperfectly, a similar purpose. After all, a crutch serves the same object as a sound limb, and it would be an act of doubtful justice to take away the artificial member in order to compel the cripple to use his infirm but natural limbs . . . Of course the Crutchites, on the other hand, have no business to insist that their wooden substitutes were originally designed by Providence as the only normal mode of

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locomotion, and to require the rest of their fellow-men to undergo amputation in order to obey the supposed Divine behests.

Miss Leycester. But that is exactly what not only Crutchites, but all makers and users of artificial limbs are anxious to do. I remember once hearing an amusing parable bearing on this subject:—In a certain country the art-limb makers entered into a compact—a kind of trades-union—with medical men and other persons interested, for their mutual behoof. It seems to have struck these ingenious artists that if all men were properly and adequately organized there would be no need of their different crafts. Artificial teeth, hair, eyes, noses, ears, arms, hands, fingers, legs, and feet depended for their sale on the real or supposed lack of these different parts of the human body. So they organized a kind of propaganda the object of which was to persuade people of the superiority in every case of artificial to natural limbs, &c. Now as the people of that country were religiously minded, it was clearly needful to convince them that these art-constructed members were providentially designed not only to be substitutes for imperfect, but even to replace sound, limbs. In other words, they tried to show that the original constitution of the world manifested a leaning towards human artifice and invention, just as the progress of civilization was marked by the advance of the imitative arts. Thus they pointed out the many children that were born deformed, or suffering from some other congenital privation; the liability of grown persons to accidents which deprived them of their bodily members and faculties; the tendency of various diseases naturally induced to cause the loss of one or other corporeal appurtenance or ornament; the effect of old age on different members and their powers, as, *e.g.* the eyes, ears, teeth, &c. They further urged the indestructible nature of the artificial substitutes. Was not a wooden leg more durable than one of flesh and bone? Were not the teeth, hair, eyes made by art more lasting than those supplied by nature? In addition to which they might be 'made to order' as to colour, size, &c., which was impossible in the case of natural productions. Were not

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gutta-percha noses and ears not only more lasting, but more shapely and better coloured than those made of cartilage? What natural skin or complexion could vie with those of art? Besides, these artificial limbs were exempt from pain. Indeed, extreme partizans hesitated not to maintain that in every particular art was superior to nature. Well, to cut the story short, these astute craftsmen obtained the measure of success which usually attends unscrupulosity and audacity. They acquired wealth and power. Instigated by their persuasion and the example of their neighbours, many well-made people hastened to the surgeons to have their natural limbs removed in order to supply themselves with artificial. There was quite a rage for wooden legs and arms, for artificial ears, noses, and eyes.

But at last a reaction set in. Men became skeptical of the superiority of artificial limbs and of the disinterestedness of those who recommended them. On experiment, it was not found that wooden legs were better adapted for locomotion than those of nature, and the ears and eyes supplied by these artists were, as regards functions, well-nigh useless. Hence they determined to return to Nature and its Creator, whose intent, as they began to see, was clearly signified by the fact that the countless majority of mankind were normally formed, and it was worse than absurd to put aside the gifts of God for the poor substitutes devised by man. Such was the parable. It ended by saying that the last advices from that country maintained this reaction to be still in progress.

TREVOR. 'More power to it,' and to every similar movement.

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EVENING IX.

SEMI-SKEPTICISM OF THE SCHOOLMEN: ERIGENA—ABELARD—AQUINAS.

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'Toutes les religions et les sectes du monde ont eu la raison naturelle pour guide. Les seuls Chrétiens ont été astreints à prendre leurs règles hors d'eux-mêmes, et à s'informer de celles que Jésus-Christ a laissées aux anciens pour être transmises aux fidèles. Cette contrainte lasse ces bons Pères: ils veulent avoir, comme les autres peuples, la liberté de suivre leurs imaginations.'

PASCAL, *Pensées*, ed. Faugère, i. 265.

'La Théologie est une science, mais en même temps combien est-ce de Sciences? Un homme est un suppôt; mais si on l'anatomise, sera-ce la tête, le cœur, l'estomac, les veines, chaque veine, chaque portion de veine, le sang, chaque humeur du sang?'

'Une ville, une campagne, de loin est une ville et une campagne; mais à mesure qu'on s'approche, ce sont des maisons, des arbres, des tuiles, des feuilles, des herbes, des fourmis, des jambes de fourmi, à l'infini. Tout cela s'enveloppe sous le nom de campagne.'

PASCAL, *Pensées*, ed. Faugère, i. 189.

'Bedenkt man wie relativ die Begriffe des Orthodoxen und Heterodoxen sind, wie, was einst heterodox ward, auch wieder orthodox wurde, und was als orthodox galt, die öffentliche Meinung für sich wieder verlor, so kann man nicht behaupten, dass das Orthodoxe ein grösseres Recht darauf habe, ein Object der Dogmengeschichte zu sein, als das Heterodoxe.'

F. C. BAUR, *Dogmengeschichte*, i. p. 24.

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EVENING IX.

SEMI-SKEPTICISM OF THE SCHOOLMEN: ERIGENA—ABELARD—AQUINAS.

TREVOR. By way of novelty, I propose to introduce our discussion on the chief types of Free-thought among the Schoolmen in an apologue or parable.

Once on a time three birds were, with many others, cooped up in a strong iron cage, which allowed only a limited space for movement, and was not too abundantly supplied with fresh air. Poor birds! They had been born in the cage and did not seem much to mind its bars, and its vapid atmosphere, and their stale and meagre provisions. Still, their nature was wild, their instincts and desires were free and unfettered. It was said that their ancestors had been induced to barter the joys of unrestricted freedom and to accept the confinement of the cage because they thereby thought to escape the enemies to which their native haunts of wood, rock, and mountain exposed them. Certainly their own faculties and powers clearly proved that they were not originally intended to pass their lives in an imprisonment, however honourable and in some respects advantageous. Nature, *e.g.* had gifted them with powerful wings, capable of ranging with great speed through the air, or of soaring upwards to almost any height. They were also endowed with an extreme lightness of form, which fully proved a primordial unsuitableness for remaining always in the same position. Even the powers of their senses, their range of vision and hearing, betokened a natural capacity for a sphere of action much greater than the bounds of their cage. Added to these physical indications of natural destiny, and pointing in the same direction, were certain feelings, desires, aptitudes, which were clearly congenital and not very easily

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repressed. Especially were they gifted with an indomitable love of freedom, an almost uncontrollable impulse to urge their flight in whatever direction their fancy suggested. Perhaps their lot in the cage would not have been quite so hard if they could have overcome this innate propensity for liberty, and suppressed entirely those restless stirrings which kept their wings in an almost continual agitation. As it was, these pent-up activities and unsatisfied yearnings were occasionally the cause of much disturbance and unhappiness. With each of the three birds the strongest impulse was to gain his liberty, or, as he saw that was impossible, to assert and enjoy such a measure of it as the limits of the cage would permit. Accordingly, the first bird sat alone on his perch and amused himself by singing a low, tender, and plaintive song, which seemed addressed more to himself than to any other living being. He sang of green fields and lovely flowers, of blue skies and lofty mountains, he carolled of brilliant sunshine, the glow of which he seemed to feel to the extremest points of his feathers, and of a limitless aërial expanse in which he flew in imagination hither and thither on strong and untiring wing. Of these and similar idealities of freedom he sang in a soft, crooning tone, until, by the magic of his own bird-lay, the cage, with its cruel bars, its stifling air, its narrow bounds, and all its other inconveniences, seemed quite to disappear. Bird the second, though he could also sing and used sometimes to indulge in an air not unlike that of his tuneful fellow-prisoner, was, however, a bird of greater muscular power and of a much bolder spirit. He occupied his time chiefly in posture-making, first hopping on one leg, then on the other, and then on the two together. This was supposed to be his way of taking exercise. He would also flap his wings violently for some minutes at a time, in order to increase their strength and activity. But his favourite pastime was dashing himself with all his might against the bars of his cage, to try if they were really so strong as they seemed. Indeed, there was a weak point or two in the cage which he struck so hard by the propulsion of his vigorous wings and powerful frame that it seemed as if he must have made his escape. But it is doubtful whether

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he quite intended this. He may have meant only, by producing a bulge in the iron bars, to enlarge in some slight degree the range of his own movements. There was, it is true, a report current in the cage that he had more than once boasted of his power to shatter the very strongest of its bars, but this may have been mere bravado on his part, for he was well known to be not devoid of vanity. What is more certain is that his plumage appeared to be always ruffled and disordered, by reason of his continual attacks on the walls of his prison. Bird the third was of a more contented turn of mind than the other two. Instead of always wanting to be free of his cage, he was inclined to think it might, if properly utilized, be large enough for a bird like himself. When he heard the first bird singing of the delights of freedom, he thought there might be dangers in the open country from which the bars of the cage and the constant supervision bestowed on its inmates afforded some protection. When he saw the second bird dashing himself against the bars, he deemed this an unwise and foolhardy experiment. Still he had the instinct of liberty as well as the other two, though he kept it in greater subordination. He, moreover, possessed the powerful wings of bird the second; and their restless energies continually demanded in his case also, some form of exercise which might satisfy them. Hence he acquired the trick of stretching out his wings in some free part of the cage, and keeping himself suspended for a long time in the air, just like a hawk hovering over its prey, so that he seemed almost motionless. — 'Which things are an allegory.'

Now 'Riddle me, riddle me, what is it?'

MISS LEYCESTER. In my opinion your riddle is easily unriddled. The cage is of course the Mediæval Church, and the bars are its dogmas. The crooning bird represents, I take it, idealism, transcending dogma, and finding a field for its energies outside the limits of the Church. The bar-breaking bird is clearly the intellect or reason, as exemplified in the case of an avowed Skeptic. I suppose the balancing bird may be an instance of what we have called Twofold Truth.

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TREVOR. Well, you are nearly right, Miss Leycester, but not quite. The singing bird is the Mystic; the next is the logician or Rationalist; while the third represents not an adherent of Twofold Truth, but that tendency to equilibration which, though coming close to it in method, never quite relinquishes its hold on dogma. These three modes of asserting the innate tendency of the human mind to speculative freedom include all those which are most observable among the Schoolmen.

ARUNDEL. I always like to get from the abstract to the concrete. We shall judge better, I think, of the appropriateness of your class-denominations when we know the actual persons you have selected as typical of each. So instead of caged birds let us hear who are the living men—Plato's *unfeathered* bipeds—whom you wish us to take as birds first, second, and third.

TREVOR. Erigena as the mystic, Abelard as the logician, while the judicial or balancing Skeptic is Aquinas.

ARUNDEL. The first two are long-recognised examples of Scholastic mysticism and rationalism. As to the third, your assimilation of the 'Angel of the Schools' to a bird is of course right enough from a natural history point of view, but I shall be glad of further enlightenment as to the meaning of his judicial or balancing Skepticism, especially as you distinguish between it and the Twofold Truth we have already considered.

TREVOR. What I mean is, briefly, that his method is controversial, not dogmatic; and more provocative of doubt than certitude. Every truth of Christianity and philosophy is propounded by him as a centre of antagonistic opinion —a question of 'obs and sols.'

MISS LEYCESTER. 'Obs and sols,' Dr. Trevor! What do you mean?

TREVOR. 'Obs and sols' is an old English cant phrase for 'objections and solutions,' and describes the general method of Scholastic discussion. When we come to speak of Aquinas—the best representative of the method—you will better see the meaning of the phrase.

HARRINGTON. The contemptuous curtailment of words

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which represent what is, after all, a necessary feature of all controversy, reveals both a popular acquaintance with Scholasticism in the ages after the Reformation, which we might have expected, and a supercilious disdain of the method, which I cannot help feeling to be unjust. Every discussion is surely a battle between 'obs and sols,' in which, as a rule, the 'sols,' as representing dogma and affirmation, are victorious.

MISS LEYCESTER. But the 'objectionists,' as our discussions show us, form a minority not to be despised, and they have also unhappily the constitution of the universe as well as of the human mind in their favour. Aquinas, I suppose, was altogether an advocate of the solutionists.

TREVOR. Certainly. But—and this is the characteristic of his on which I am bound to lay especial stress—he was a remarkably—some people would say excessively—fair one. That all objections, however originated, were destined to find their proper solutions was, in his opinion, as much the intention of the Author of the world as that men's eyes were made to see or their feet to walk with. Hence he insisted on objections and doubts as necessary complements of the affirmation and dogma which, in his view, was the final outcome of all controversy.

MRS. HARRINGTON. To me such a position does not seem to differ much from Twofold Truth.

TREVOR. I shall, by-and-by, have to distinguish between the two, and I think you will admit the distinction to be substantial. Aquinas was not only too orthodox, he was also too acute a logician to admit that two contradictories could both be true at once.

MISS LEYCESTER. He seems to have stopped short, by an arbitrary interdiction of further advance, on the very threshhold of Skepticism. I have known persons with a precisely similar intellectual bent. They assume such a dogma, *e.g.* to be unquestionably true, but they are quite ready to appreciate and even to second attacks upon it as a kind of intellectual gymnastics, up to the very point of its destruction or subversion, when they immediately unfurl the white flag. I presume they feel the need of some outlet for their

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mental energies, like the birds in the cage felt restless activities in their wings and legs.

MRS. HARRINGTON. The main difference between such posture-making and Twofold Truth seems to me to be that the latter is the more outspoken and honest of the two, and, whatever the effect of such perpetual equipoising on those who exercise it, its influence upon others must be Skeptical and disquieting.

HARRINGTON. That reminds me—— Where is your copy of Lamb's works, Doctor? I want the immortal 'Elia.'

TREVOR. Here it is (rising and handing Mr. Harrington a book from his shelves).

HARRINGTON. The assimilation of Lamb to the 'Angel of the Schools' is a quaint juxtaposition which would have been very exhilarating to the genial humourist. Nevertheless, Lamb was in his younger years a sucking Aquinas—at least he was influenced by precisely the same tactics which the great Schoolman employed. Here is an amusing and for our purpose not impertinent extract from his reminiscences of childhood: 'In my father's book-closet the History of the Bible, by Stackhouse, occupied a distinguished station. . . . I have not met with the work from that time to this; but I remember it consisted of Old Testament stories, orderly set down, with the *objection* appended to each story, and the *solution* of the objection regularly tacked to that. The *objection* was a summary of whatever difficulties had been opposed to the credibility of the history by the shrewdness of ancient or modern infidelity, drawn up with an almost complimentary excess of candour. The *solution* was brief, modest, and satisfactory. The bane and antidote were both before you. To doubts so put and so quashed there seemed to be an end for ever. The dragon lay dead for the foot of the veriest babe to trample on. But—like as was rather feared than realized from that slain monster in Spenser—from the womb of those crushed errors young dragonets would creep, exceeding the prowess of so tender a Saint George as myself to vanquish. The habit of expecting objections to every passage set me upon starting more

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objections for the glory of finding a solution of my own for them. I became staggered and perplexed, a Skeptic in long coats. . . .' There I think we have a fair illustration of the effect of 'obs and sols' upon minds of a certain type, though it should not be pushed too far. Lamb took a humorous pleasure in exaggerating the effect of the method upon himself. In reality it was very transient. He threw off the intellectual 'measles' just as easily as a strong child throws off the physical disease of the name.

ARUNDEL. I should be sorry to repress in any measure wholesome Free-thought, but an unrestrained presentation on every subject of 'obs and sols' seems to me very mischievous.

TREVOR. In mediæval times the mischievous tendency was on the side, not of discussion and publicity, but of repression. The aim of ecclesiasticism was then, as it is always, to annihilate the individual, to exterminate all mental originality and spontaneity. Human thought, no matter on what topic, must be run into its own mould. All research must limit itself to the form it deemed fit to prescribe. All human progress—like a modern locomotive—must advance only on the steel rails of its dogma and infallibility. Nothing more forcibly illustrates the thraldom of the human mind in the centuries preceding the Renaissance than the theological and ecclesiastical colouring of all its activities. All poetry was confined to sacred or semi-sacred subjects. The drama was a representation of sacred mysteries. Literature, a sombre collection of works on asceticism or manuals of devotion. Even the heathen philosophers, *e.g.* Aristotle and Cicero, could not reproduce their science or eloquence until each had received the *imprimatur* of the Church.

HARRINGTON. Most true, Doctor! Yet on the principle of a 'Soul of good in things evil,' the destruction of individualism and the consequent feeling of impotence and dependence impelled men to seek their intellectual pabulum from other sources, and to adopt other writers as models. This is in a large measure the signification of the Renaissance. The Church, for her own selfish purposes, had destroyed the individual both as to his intellect and conscience, but the

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very dependence she had fostered found an outcome she had not foreseen in the revival of classical literature. By depriving her children of the power of independent judgment, she had made the influence of the secular and Skeptical tendencies of the Renaissance much greater than they need have been. This is, indeed, the inevitable result of all undue repression: it provokes and suggests an outlet for pent-up energies in other, probably forbidden, directions.

MISS LEYCESTER. This tendency of mediæval orthodoxy reminds one of the story which Racine used to tell with high glee. Suffering once from some slight illness, he had recourse to a medical man, who, after strictly prohibiting him from drinking wine, from eating any kind of food, and from applying himself to the least possible occupation, ended by saying, 'For the rest, enjoy yourself.' So ecclesiasticism, with cruel but unconscious irony, is equally liberal in its prescriptions: 'Don't think, don't inquire, don't read, except certain books; don't doubt whatever you do, but in all other respects be happy.'

ARUNDEL. Theology assumes, and most justly, that man must be governed—that a wild egoism is not only detrimental to the individual, but absolutely fatal to social life. When we come to consider the untamed spirits to which the Renaissance gave birth, we shall, if I mistake not, revert with satisfaction to the more restrained and orderly, even if commonplace, intellects which were evolved by mediæval orthodoxy. Moreover, I cannot help thinking that you exaggerate the repressive effect of the latter influence. Take, *e.g.* the three men we mean to discuss to-night, Erigena, Abelard, and Aquinas; they certainly evince a considerable amount of individuality, and that too of a striking character.

TREVOR. No doubt; but in entire opposition to the will of the Church, and at no small danger to their own lives. That Romanism has evolved a great variety of intellectual formations (or rather has possessed them within her pale) is a truth I have no desire to impugn, especially as it is the only good part in the system, regarded as a whole. But, in reality, even this claim is fictitious. The mental variety we

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have in Romanism testifies only to the irrepressible self-assertion of all strong intellects—the inherent superiority of the individual over the system—and the phenomenon exists, not in consequence, but in spite of the teaching of the Church. It is the tritest of trite observations that the Church has in every age proved herself the enemy of sound learning, and of its parent Free-thought. What does not appear so generally acknowledged is that she is so necessarily and inevitably by reason of her excessive dogma.

MISS LEYCESTER. And yet I have heard Roman Catholics allege that during the Middle Ages the Church was the great protector of ancient learning, and that, had it not been for the literature stored away in monastic libraries, the Renaissance would have been impossible.

TREVOR. That incidentally and involuntarily the Church helped to preserve some valuable monuments of ancient learning no candid student of history would deny. But that the Church generally as an ecclesiastical corporation, *i.e.* in the person of her popes, her ruling authorities, and councils, has ever been anything but virulently hostile to all secular learning, is abundantly proved. The keynote to her conduct in this particular was given by Tertullian when he called the ancient philosophers 'the Patriarchs of Heretics.' This was the spirit that animated the Church in her long warfare against Aristotle. Nay more, the mediæval Church unhappily preached a crusade of ignorance against every kind of secular enlightenment. With a perverse ingenuity she conceived it her mission (it was certainly her interest) to interpret the words of St. Paul, 'God hath made foolish the wisdom of the world,' as inculcating a propaganda of obscurantism and self-stultification. As an illustration of her general animus, listen to this 'Encomium of Folly' by an influential Catholic centuries before Erasmus, who unluckily does not use irony or sarcasm, but is grave, simple, earnest. The writer is Leo, Abbot of St. Boniface, and Apostolic Legate, who wrote in the tenth century. He says: 'The Vicars of St. Peter do not want as masters, neither Plato, nor Virgil, nor Terence, nor any of the other herds of philosophers (*neque ceteros pecudes philosophorum*).

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St. Peter knew none of these things, and nevertheless was chosen to be doorkeeper of heaven. . . . God from the beginning of the world has selected, not orators and philosophers, but the ignorant and rustics.' Gregory the Great also thought it behoved him 'to hate grammar for the love of Christ.'[1]

ARUNDEL. By a curious coincidence, the argument of Leo, Abbot of St. Boniface, was employed only last Sunday in my parish by a Methodist preacher, who, I was told, railed vehemently at Church priests for their University education, their book-learning, their Greek and Latin, and other scholastic disadvantages of the same kind, saying in effect that the more ignorant a man was the greater was his likelihood of being accepted by God.

HARRINGTON. We must, I think, concede that there is a point of view from which both Abbot Leo and your itinerant evangelist may have been right. There is what Bacon calls a '*pars destruens*' to every scheme of teaching—an initiatory nescience—a kind of weeding and deep-ploughing process requisite for the reception of new seed. In the recognition of this fact there is little difference among the great teachers of the world: Sokrates, Jesus Christ, St. Paul, Descartes, Bacon, are all agreed on this point. However variously expressed, a preliminary condition of *receptivity* is postulated by all. Moreover, the exaltation of ignorance on these occasions may also be explained and justified by the instinctive self-assertion of morality as against a domineering and, perhaps, immoral intellectualism. The world's experience has not altogether confirmed the Sokratic dictum that knowledge and virtue are identical. By the way, the text of St. Paul just quoted has always been a favourite with Skeptics.

TREVOR. I quite differ from you as to the failure of the Sokratic principle. There may be, I grant, many a case in which virtue is based upon and sustained by not only ignorance and misbelief, but even by gross superstition;

[1] St. Ouen, in his *Life of St. Eloi*, speaking of Homer and Virgil, calls their poems 'Sceleratorum næniæ Poetarum.' Comp., too, Gregory, *Epp.* lib. ix. l. iv., and lib. xi. l. liv. See, also, A. Bartoli, *I Precursori del Rinascimento*, p. 31 note.

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just as vice may occasionally be found in alliance with great intellectual gifts. Unhappy marriages of this kind are not unknown. But as a rule applicable not to individuals and particular systems, but to the progress of collective humanity, I have not the least doubt that true virtue does increase in proportion to complete thorough many-sided knowledge. . . . I am aware that the knowledge-despising expressions of St. Paul are often quoted by Skeptics. Indeed, one of our Free-thinkers, La-Mothe-le-Vayer, is almost inclined on their authority to bring him in a Skeptic. But obscurantists, we must remember, find it convenient to confound two quite opposite kinds of ignorance—one unrealized, unconscious, apathetic; the other enlightened, inquiring, and conscious—the former the foe, the latter the friend, of civilization and human progress. It is the latter that is eulogized by Sokrates and St. Paul.

MISS LEYCESTER. Virtual obscurantism seems to me confined to no sect or system of belief. I fear it is just as common with extreme sections of the English Church as among Romanists and Nonconformists. Indeed, considering the unlimited power it confers on demagogues, whether lay or ecclesiastical, the wonder is that its advocacy is not more frequent; perhaps the reason is that it is self-destructive. The plea of the utility of ignorance before our Maker was well met by the remark of some bishop—I forget his name—who replied to an argument of that kind, that 'if God did not need our wisdom, still less need had we of our ignorance.'

ARUNDEL. According to my experience, pleas of that kind rarely do much hurt in the present day. The practical common-sense of mankind is quite strong enough to push the alleged advantages of ignorance to a *reductio ad absurdum*. The moment piety becomes identified with imbecility it loses most of its attraction for thoughtful people. The mischievous effect of the argument was greater when it was allied with the Calvinistic theory of supernatural grace; but as that article, together with the rest of Calvin's creed, is happily now moribund, Ignorance is compelled to stand alone, and her native ugliness is therefore recognised in all its manifold repulsiveness.

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TREVOR. I wish I were able to agree with you, but the principle of supernaturalism seems to me to be as rampant as ever, though in a slightly different form. It is, *e.g.* the mainspring of sacerdotalism; indeed, both the suicidal character of the argument and its opposition to the spirit of modern progress are lost sight of in every claim of the individual to supernatural authority. The world seems slow in realizing that every system of priestcraft and excessive dogma must be stationary if not retrograde. Meanwhile we must console ourselves with the reflection—one lesson of our present subject—that no system of authoritative and repressive dogma can ever annihilate the individual characteristics and self-assertory power of vigorous intellects. The reason of humanity in its highest capacity and fullest perfection is really greater than any inclusive system. The bird is after all larger than its cage, the prisoner than his cell. Another reflection that will suggest itself to our notice will be the endless variety and subtlety of intellectual processes. Imagination, devout sentiment, ordinary feeling, reason, intuition, present themselves, not as coefficients, but as possessing each of them the complete distinctness and independence of one whole mind. Further, when these qualities coexist, as often happens in the same mind, we shall find a kind of plastic energy, by which the stronger will discharge the functions normally pertaining to the weaker. Reason, *e.g.* will take on itself the office of imagination, and imagination will perform the functions of the reason—a mental analogy, in short, to the interchange of physical functions often observable in our bodily organization. I think, too, another conclusion—though I have little hope of carrying my auditory with me on this point—is suggested by our present topic, and that is, that the primary instinct of all normally constituted minds is towards liberty; and that this instinct is more marked in direct proportion to the richness and variety of intellectual endowment, whence I should draw the inference that Free-thought on all subjects is the natural legitimate condition of the human reason.

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John Scotus Erigena.[1]

Few chapters in the records of humanity are more painful than the history of the Church from the fourth to the ninth century —the period usually denominated 'the dark ages.' With the exception of a few fitful and transitory gleams, the light of Christ's own teaching had quite disappeared, and in its stead dogma-mania and hierarchical ambition had usurped their pernicious sway. Looking back from our present standpoint—the end of the ninth century—we can see that growth, development, had taken place, but, like some other kinds of increase in bulk, the process was, to a great extent, diseased and morbific. The simplicity of the gospel had become swollen into a gigantic mass of incomprehensible and self-contradictory propositions, just as in ascites the normal bulk of the human frame is enlarged and all its functions impaired by the progress of the disease. Councils had assembled under the boasted guidance of the Holy Spirit, and had formulated decrees and sanctioned deeds which might more reasonably have claimed diabolical suggestion. Heretics had been punished for daring to use their intellectual faculties, and champions of orthodoxy had avenged their peculiar Christianity in a manner utterly alien not only from the spirit of its Founder but from the ordinary dictates of humanity. The spirit of the Bishop of Hippo in its later stages of dogma-deterioration, cold, pitiless, domineering, and

[1] The authorities quoted on Erigena are the following:—

Opera omnia, Floss's edition in Migne, *Patr. Lat.* vol. cxxii.

Johannes Scotus Erigena, &c. Von Dr. Johannes Hüber. This is a supplement to the same author's admirable *Philosophie der Kirchenväter*.

Leben und Lehre des Johannes Scotus Erigena. Von Dr. Christlieb.

Johannes Scotus Erigena und die Wissenschaft seiner Zeit. Von Dr. F. A. Staudenmaier.

Möller (N.), *Joh. Scotus Erigena und seine Irrthümer.*

Scot Érigène et la Phil. Scholastique. Par St.-René Taillandier.

Hauréau, *Hist. de la Phil. Scholastique*, vol. i. new ed. 148–76.

Gesch. der Scholastischen Philosophie. V. Dr. W. Kaulich. Th. i. pp. 65–216.

Hist. Lit. de la France, vol. v. 416–29.

Rousselot, *Études sur la Philosophie dans le Moyen Age*, i. 28–82.

Hist. Lit. de la France sous Charlemagne. Par J. J. Ampère. Chap. vii. p. 115, &c.

The Schools of Charles the Great. By J. Bass Mullinger. Chap. v.

Gesch. der Philosophie des Mittelalters. Von Dr. A. Stöckl. Vol. i. pp. 31–128.

Prantl, *Gesch. der Logik*, vol. ii. pp. 30–37.

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ambitious, became the accepted model of episcopal autocracy and infallibility. No wonder that there was a development of dogma, an increasing elaboration of the Christian Creed. The Church, to give her her due, had neglected no means of securing notional unanimity and, in her own opinion, correctness. Her astuteness in the effort was equalled only by her perfect unscrupulosity. If she proved exigeant when verbal abstractions and refinements were involved, she showed herself no less complaisant in regard of the mere dictates of morality. Not only was orthodoxy superior to right conduct, but might be accepted as a compensation for moral error; while no rectitude of conduct or purity of life could absolve the conscientious thinker who might chance to become, in Boileau's expressive phrase, the 'martyr of a diphthong.' To peccant humanity and an immoral age no discrimination could have been more agreeable. What laxly minded king or courtier would not readily exchange a few verbal propositions (the import of which he did not affect to understand) for a licence to sin? If the sale of such 'indulgences' was at first limited, it was only by the number of those able to pay for them. The open traffic of the sixteenth century was in the fifth somewhat secret, and what any man's money could effect in the latter epoch was in the former restricted to the few possessors of worldly power and ecclesiastical orthodoxy. How far the spirit that truckled to the passions of immoral kings and queens, in order to secure their support of a given creed, was different from that which filled Tetzel's money-boxes is a question of casuistry needless to determine. Impelled by such agencies, as well as by the natural effects of controversy on a number of speculative, indemonstrable articles of faith, there was a large development of ecclesiastical dogma. It seems, indeed, to have proceeded *pari passu* with the increasing corruption and decrepitude of the Roman Empire, and to have thriven on the elements of moral decay and disorganization, just as a poisonous fungus thrives on the decaying roots of a tree. It need hardly be added that during these dark centuries no truly original mind emerged from the combination of barbarism and bigotry that constituted the State and Church. There was no standpoint on which the human reason might be placed, no subject-matter for the exercise of its powers. Nay, what need was there of a truth-searching faculty when truth itself, ready made, authoritative, infallible, was the boasted possession of the Christian hierarchy? As we saw on a former occasion, the Church had long since condemned classical studies. The inhibition had doubtless subserved the purposes of its obscurantist authors. Depriving their victims of the only

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possible independent and educational exercise of their faculties, they were rendered more completely the bond slaves of ecclesiastical rapacity and superstition. The irruption of the barbarians which served to complete the destruction of classical learning already begun by the Church had its own compensatory elements in the simplicity of life and purity of manners wherein they greatly excelled the effete Christians of the Roman Empire.[1] Unfortunately, however, these primitive virtues were as quickly corrupted by contact with the vices of the Church, as barbarous nations now are contaminated by intercourse with professedly Christian communities. With other diseases of an emasculate civilization these, too, caught the dogma-mania of ecclesiasticism. Together with the language of Latin Christianity they acquired the Shibboleths of her sects, they divided themselves into orthodox and heterodox, and vituperated and slew each other for minute divergences of faith with as great readiness and pious zeal as if they had been brought up within the Church itself.

But amid all this darkness of religious fanaticism, sacerdotal ambition, and popular ignorance, there was at least one spot in Christendom in which liberal culture asserted its power, where Homer and Virgil were read and commented on, where intellectual freedom maintained its hallowed sway, and that single bright spot amid the darkness of the sixth century was Ireland. 'I do not know,' says Hauréau,[2] 'in the beginnings of modern science, another fact of equal importance and meriting equal attention.' From the 'Holy Island,' as his eponym Erigena implies, bringing with him the classical and liberal teaching of the Irish schools, and the intellectual vigour and audacity of the Celtic race, came John Scotus to the court of Charles the Bald, somewhere about the year A.D. 845.

Besides the fact just mentioned—Erigena's migration to Frankland, and the high honour in which he was held by its philosophic monarch—little is known of his personal history. His birth is dubiously assigned to the first quarter of the ninth century, and his death is variously placed between 872 and 895. Of the conflicting traditions of his destiny it would be hopeless to attempt a reconciliation. That he imparted new fame and lustre to the 'School of the Palace' instituted by Charlemagne, that his influ-

[1] Comp. the well-known passage of Salvian, *De Gub. Dei*, iv. 12, and vii. *passim*. See also p. 154 of this volume, and Mr. Mullinger's work below, p. 23.

[2] *Singularités Historiques*, &c. 'Écoles d'Irlande,' pp. 1 and 2. Comp. Mr. Bass Mullinger, *Schools of Charlemagne*, p. 174.

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ence extended beyond the confines of Frankland; that his teaching was esteemed true and therefore dangerous by the Roman hierarchy —all this is undoubted; and thus much of his history is verified by his works. But before examining the system contained in these works, and thus determining Erigena's relation to Scholastic Free-thought, it will be expedient to glance at his principles and method.

Foremost among the former, constituting the basis of all his thought, as Professor Prantl has remarked,[1] is the axiom, 'True philosophy and true theology are identical.'[2] Erigena thus demands a unison of all the intellectual activities of humanity on the sole basis of reason. Though the principle had already been avouched by the more deeply thinking among the Fathers, *e.g.* Augustine, this was only in a half-hearted manner—oftentimes it was no more than a grudging compliment to heathen philosophy wrested from Christian dogmatists against their will. But by Erigena it was avowed fully and without reserve. The consequences of this axiomatic principle were of the utmost importance. 1st. Theology and philosophy were immediately assimilated in method. Hitherto each had claimed her own: theology had appealed to authority, philosophy to reason, and the respective domains of either had been regarded with suspicion and mistrust by the other.

Especially had ecclesiastical Christianity denounced Gentile philosophy, as we have repeatedly seen. Nay, the very attempt to discover truth outside the Christian creed was held to be pregnant with danger. Erigena's position was therefore irreconcilable with the dominant thought of his time, and was all the more dangerous from being to reasoning beings absolutely impregnable. It was a mistake, said Erigena, to suppose that authority and reason were enemies. 'True authority is not opposed to right reason, nor right reason to true authority. Both emanate from the same fountain of Divine wisdom.'[3] Hence he exhorts his disciple: 'Let no authority frighten you from the conclusions which the true persuasion of reasonable contemplation teaches.'[4] Of the two, he further remarks, reason is prior in its nature, although authority is prior in time, and to the first must be conceded the superiority due to it on that account. Authority has its own ultimate ground of validity in reason, but reason never in authority, for all autho-

[1] *Logik*, ii. p. 24, note 101.

[2] *De Prædest.* i. 1, Floss, p. 358: 'Conficitur inde, veram esse Philosophiam veram religionem, conversimque veram religionem esse veram philosophiam.'

[3] *De Div. Nat.* i. 66.

[4] *Ibid.* ch. 68.

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rity not approved by reason appears infirm, whereas true reason fortified by its own excellences and thus rendered immutable has no need of the confirmation of authority.[1] Hence in all matters reason must be employed first, and af erwards authority.[2] Such was both the basis and the primary moment of Erigena's thought-system. When the general condition of Christendom in the ninth century is borne in mind, we cannot feel surprised at the glowing eulogiums historians of philosophy bestow on the Irish 'Regius Professor' of Charles the Bald. De Gerando, *e.g.* strikingly compares the apparition of such a man at such an epoch to 'finding a monument of art standing upright in the midst of a sandy desert.'[3]

2. Another outcome of the same ground-principle is Erigena's appeal to heathendom as a coequal fount of truth with Christianity. Philosophy in the ninth century was a synonym for Gentile culture, and its assimilation to Christianity presupposed some acquaintance with its sources. Erigena's attention was accordingly, as William of Malmesbury expressed it, 'turned towards Greece.' Across the intervening darkness he cast a fond retrospective glance to the masters of Hellenic enlightenment, foremost of whom he esteemed Plato, while even his authorities among the Christian Fathers seem to have been valued in proportion to their sympathy with Greek freedom and Platonic idealism.[4] Although Erigena laboured to prove that this intercrossing of Gentilism with Christianity was a legitimate process, grounded on true reason and a comprehensive estimate of Divine agency in human history, it was a principle that the Church had always regarded with mistrust, and not unfrequently visited with malediction. But this alliance of theology and philosophy—

[1] *De Div. Nat.* ch. 69. Comp. Kaulich, pp. 89; Hüber, pp. 132–34.

[2] Dr. Hüber remarks that the reason thus eulogized by Erigena is not the natural reason of humanity, but a kind of supernatural reason imparted immediately by Divine grace. The natural reason of man was, according to Erigena, corrupted by the Fall This is, no doubt, true, but Erigena admits that the ill-influence of the Fall on the reason was only partial, and he allows 'the supernatural reason' to be a possession of all thinkers, heathen as well as Christian. It is clear, in short, that Erigena held *all reason* and its exercise to be Divine. Hüber, p. 133.

[3] *Hist. Compar. des Systèmes de Phil.* iv. p. 354.

[4] Erigena's favourite philosophic and patristic authorities, in the order of importance he himself attached to them, are as follows: the Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Maximus the Confessor, Plato, the two Gregories Nyssa and Nazianzum, Origen, Basil, and Augustine. He calls Origen, 'Magnum Originem diligentissimum rerum inquisitorem.'

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unblessed by the Church—had yet another implication. The instrument of philosophy and of reason is dialectic: the same instrument must be employed by theology: the dogmas of the Church must become the theses of the Schools. In this demand was involved, I need hardly say, the whole history and significance of Scholasticism, as well as the subsequent analysis, nominalistic and Protestant, that accomplished its destruction. Ecclesiastical theology was a matter of quite another kind. It vigorously repudiated the aid and resented the investigation of dialectic. It demanded, not the criticism, the discrimination, the analysis of logic, but unquestioning, undoubting assent. But this ordinary Church-theology was altogether alien from Erigena's thought. He had no conception of anything which could claim exemption from ratiocination and the deliberate approval of the verifying faculty, and for this especial reason, that dialectic was not conceived by him as a human science formed by mechanical arts, but as a process involved in the very nature of things. He thus adopts the scope and definition of the subject employed by Sokrates,[1] and makes the laws of thought identical with the laws of being or reality. To the operation of these laws in nature and history we must ascribe the rich variety, the infinite manifoldings of development, we discern both in one and the other.[2] Dialectic has, moreover, a specially sacred significance as being the reason of God, the Divine *Logos*. Erigena therefore applies it to theology as its sole and appropriate method. He examines the being of God by the test of the Aristotelian categories, employs the syllogistic form for most of his theological ratiocination, and eulogizes dialectic as a gift undoubtedly conferred on man by God.[3] He thus shares the instincts and methods of Scholasticism, and justifies the title often bestowed on him as 'the first of the Schoolmen.'[4] But Erigena's conception of the Divine origin and sacred character of dialectic does not hinder his acknowledgment of its double-sided capacity. He admits that it may be employed perniciously for establishing error as well as demonstrating truth, though he denies that it was given to man for this purpose.[5] Indeed, the

[1] Comp. Discussion on Sokrates, vol. i. Evening III.

[2] Dr. Hüber points out that Erigena has anticipated the speculations of Schelling and Hegel on the relation of dialectic to the physical universe; comp. his work, p. 160.

[3] *De Prædest.* vii. 1, p. 382: 'Potest enim aliquis in disciplina disputandi quæ dicitur dialectica peritus, quæ nullo dubitante a Deo homini donatur,' &c.

[4] On the dialectical form of his philosophy, comp. Prantl, ii. p. 24.

[5] Prantl, *ibid.* p. 24, note 107; comp. Hüber, p. 152.

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possibility of its misuse by falsehood renders it all the more needful that linguistic sciences—*i.e.* rhetoric and dialectic—should be cultivated by those who desire to defend the truth. For whatever be the incidental defects or possible perversions of dialectic, there is no other road to the discovery of truth. And here, perhaps, we should take some notice of the few passages in his writings in which a strong flavour of nominalism seems to be found, especially as he afterwards had the reputation of being a forerunner of nominalists. Some of the conclusions of that school are certainly found in his writings, though they have not yet acquired the complete differentiation from realism they afterwards attained:[1] we shall meet them in their full maturity when we come to Ockam. Erigena thus held that dialectic is the science which deals with mental concepts, and he admits that human language derived its power, as Aristotle said, not from nature, but from convention. He goes, however, far beyond Ockam when he maintains that 'what we know in words we know also in the things signified,' and thinks that the reasons of all things, while they are understood by the super-essential nature of the word, are eternal. We may, I think, take this occasional nominalism as a proof of Erigena's intellectual comprehensiveness —his insight into other aspects of truth than those that met with his fullest concurrence. It also marks his standpoint in the coalescence of antagonistic thought-directions which preceded the dualism of the school-philosophy. Perhaps, too, he was induced to place a stress on names inconsistent with his general realism by the prominence he assigned the *Logos* as representing both 'word' and 'reason.'[2]

Coming now to the system excogitated by means of this rationalism, idealism, and dialectic, it will be convenient to follow 'the division of nature' set before us by Erigena himself. Understanding by 'nature' the universe or sum of all existing things, he divides it into four kinds—

1. Nature that creates and is not created;
2. Nature that is created and creates;
3. Nature that is created and does not create;
4. Nature that is not created nor creates;

or, as they may be paraphrased—(1) God; (2) the world of ideas; (3) the Kosmos, or physical universe; (4) the consummation of all existing things.

[1] Prantl, ii. p. 36.

[2] Prantl, p. 31, note 124.

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1. God is the centre of Erigena's philosophy, but in commencing the investigation of His nature and attributes we are met with a preliminary difficulty—He is the converging point of opposite methods. According to Erigena, there is an affirmative and negative theology. The former asserts what we seem compelled indirectly and metaphorically[1] to predicate of Deity; the latter, with greater directness and profundity of reason, denies all affirmations on the subject. To use his own words, 'It is more truly denied than affirmed that God is any of those things predicated of Him, for, being by nature super-essential, He should be adored super-essentially'—that is, undogmatically. 'In theological methods for investigating the sublimity and incomprehensibility of the Divine nature there is more virtue in negation than in affirmation.'[2] All the attributes commonly assigned to God, such as 'essence, goodness, truth, justice, wisdom, &c., which seem to be not only Divine but most Divine, and to signify nothing else but the very Divine substance or essence, are only metaphorical; in other words, they are translated from the creature to the Creator.'[3] The result of Erigena's researches into the Divine nature and the logical outcome of his negative theology he gives in these terms: 'Nothing can properly be predicated of God, since He far excels all understanding and all definitions. He is best known by nescience, and ignorance of Him is true wisdom.'[4] What then, we may ask, is left of God according to Erigena's teaching? Logically nothing; the Divine Being is absolute nothingness.[5] His definition is formed by the elimination of all

[1] 'Translative' is Erigena's word. Baur, in his *Dreieinigkeit*, renders it by 'relativ,' vol. ii. p. 277.

[2] *De Div. Nat.* iii. 20: 'In Theologicis siquidem Regulis ad investigandum divinæ naturæ sublimitatem et incomprehensibilitatem plus negationis quam affirmationis virtus valet.' Comp. Hüber, p. 142.

[3] *De Div. Nat.* i. 14.

[4] *Ibid.* iii. 20. To those unversed in the abstrusities of ontological reasoning it may be well to note that Erigena's 'Non Being' signifies Pure Being, *i.e.* Being considered as devoid of relation, quality, condition of any kind.

[5] 'Nil de Deo proprie potest dici, quoniam superat omnem intellectum omnesque significationes, qui melius nesciendo scitur, cujus ignorantia vera est sapientia' (*De Div. Nat.* i. 66). For similarly negative conceptions of God comp. Dr. Christlieb, p. 164, n. 2. Erigena agrees with the Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in styling God ἀνώνυμος, 'the nameless one'; but it should be added that he permits the ascription to God of His customary attributes, provided they are qualified by ὑπερ, or *super*, to denote their distinction from human qualities of the same name. Thus, though we cannot predicate truth, wisdom, or knowledge of God, we may

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qualities and characteristics of every kind, with, as an arbitrary reservation, the exception of one—pure being or existence. 'There is nothing,' says Erigena, 'contrary to God save non-existence.' This exception is clearly purchased at some sacrifice of dialectical consistency as we should now understand the argument, though the process of abstracting all qualities in order to arrive at a higher generalization, such as essence, forms the ground-principle of all realism.

Erigena derives both his negative theology and his definition of Deity from prior thinkers, but it is impossible to avoid contrasting his rationalism with the positivism of ordinary Christian creeds. The methods were in point of fact antagonistic. The evolution of Church-dogma had been effected by perpetual definitions and determinations. Not only the being of God, but all His qualities and relations had been asserted categorically and definitively without the least shadow of misgiving, or apparently the faintest conception of the difficulty of the subject.[1] Erigena, therefore, did eminent service to the cause of philosophical Christianity by suggesting abstention from dogmatic theorizing in a matter where certainty was impossible.

But, as we shall soon see, he is able to erect with his single attribute of pure being a theology of no small dimensions. God is not only Being, He is all-Being; He sums up the whole of existence, spiritual as well as material. The very name of God expresses the immanence of all things in Him, whether it be derived from *θεωρεῖν*, to see, or from *θέειν*, to run; for God sees all that exists in itself, while He discerns nothing out of itself, for nothing outside of Him exists; or, taking the other derivation, God runs through all things, sustaining them by movement and persistent energizing.[2] Thus God is identical with the universe, but without losing thereby His own independent existence. In the apostle's words, He is 'above all, and through all, and in all.' Occupying this high ontological standpoint, Erigena has no need of evidences or proofs of God's existence; that is presupposed in existence itself.

call Him super-wise, super-knowing, &c., a distinction of which it may be said that it is more realistic than real.

[1] Comp. *De Div. Nat.* iii. 2, where Erigena sneers at those who dogmatize on the Trinity, and, while allowing to those who investigate the nature of God to follow their chosen guides, avows his own intention of following only his own reason. Erigena so often sneers at dogmatizers that as a rule we may accept all reference to them as directed against his controversial adversaries.

[2] *De Div. Nat.* i. 15, 16; comp. St.-René Taillandier, pp. 98, 99.

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Dr. Hüber remarks that throughout his works there is only a single echo of the teleological argument, where Erigena, *e.g.* maintains that 'every creature is a light that reveals the Father.'[1]

That the direction of this theology is towards Pantheism need hardly be stated. How far it is actually and consciously Pantheistic is not so easy to determine. Much of his language on the subject is metaphorical, and may be largely paralleled from the rhetoric of theology both in ancient and modern times. The whole tendency of Erigena's thought was undoubtedly averse to such an identification of God with creation as would imply the materializing of the Divine essence. 'It is not the creature but He Himself who is the aim of the creative energy. He realizes and glorifies Himself in it, as the artist does in his work.'[2] On the whole, I am inclined to agree with Dr. Hüber, that Erigena's 'absolute' is not that of Spinoza but that of Schelling.[3] While allowing the essential connection of the Creator with the material universe, he is careful to preserve, at least in terms, both His spirituality and personality. A prominent position in Erigena's system is awarded to the second Person of the Trinity, but He is regarded almost exclusively from a metaphysical point of view. The Christ of the Synoptics almost disappears from his thought-scheme, and we have instead the Logos-doctrine of St. John. The Divine 'reason' or 'discourse' constitutes the dialectical process by which the Deity comes forth into self-manifestation in the external world. It is the 'world idea' or 'world power' by means of which we have the countlessly varied processes of nature, together with their innumerable results. By the same orderly evolution and agency we possess all the manifold effects of human ratiocination—the laws of the mind as well as the operations of nature being parts of the Divine reason. This is indeed the ground on which Erigena bases his contention of the superiority of reason to authority. It is needless to point out the enormous expansion of Erigena's idea by Schelling and Hegel, and I am far from wishing to deny the sublimity of the conception in itself; but it certainly renders the position of historical Christianity insecure both in Erigena's case and in that of his modern disciples. The life of Jesus of Nazareth thereby

[1] Comp. Hüber, p. 159.

[2] Hüber, p. 177.

[3] Pp. 180, 181. Hüber proposes to distinguish the materialistic Pantheism of Spinoza from the spiritual Pantheism of Schelling by denominating the former Pankosmism. On the relation of Erigena to modern German transcendentalism comp. Christlieb, pp. 292, 293; Staudenmaier, chap. v. 'Über das Wesen der Speculativen Theologie,' pp. 299, &c.

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becomes a mere temporary phase of an eternal process, a single moment in the lapse of countless ages. The Holy Ghost in Erigena's system is, like the other persons of the Trinity, regarded from the standpoint of His relation to the universe. He is the cause of the division, multiplication, and distribution of those primordial causes engendered by the Father through the Son, to their several effects, *i.e.* into genera and species, into numbers and distinctions. He is thus the immediate agency in the production of the various effects we see in nature, and He is similarly the distributor of the various gifts of grace in man. The procession of the Holy Ghost Erigena defines in a manner which proves his intellectual independence and his indifference to authoritative dogmas whencesoever they might originate, for he neither accepts the definition of the Eastern Church nor that of Rome, but steers a middle course between them, and takes as his own definition, 'From the Father through the Son.'[1]

Of the Trinity as a whole, Erigena finds numerous analogies, some in human consciousness, others in nature. In itself the Trinity is a mystery just as the nature of God is a mystery, or the essence of any natural phenomenon is a mystery. We are merely able to affirm that it is so, without being able to determine the actual *modus operandi*, or to assign its reason. With his monistic aspirations Erigena is always careful to define the Trinity so as not to infringe on the unity of the Deity; most of his illustrations and metaphors indicate only a distinction of attribute and relation. Thus he remarks, *à propos* of the Trinity, that Abraham in relation to himself is called Abraham, but in relation to his son is called father; but no one supposes in such a case that the two titles are more than names, or that they denote a distinction of personality. The difference is purely nominal and relative. So also the operations of Father, Word, and Holy Spirit, though distinguished by theologians, are only different names of the self-same activity. They are 'multiple in virtue, not in number.'[2]

Passing over Erigena's second nature—'which is created and creates'—in other words, the primordial ideas which are both the antitypes and causes of all things, we come

3rdly, to the Kosmos or physical world. This is an emanation of the ideal world as it exists in the mind of the Father, formed by the wisdom of the Logos, and distributed by the agency of the Holy

[1] Comp. Hüber, p. 201. He thoroughly approves of Erigena's *via media* in the controversy.

[2] *De Div. Nat.* iii. 22: 'Illud unum multiplex virtute est non numero.'

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Ghost. In the creative act which is eternal God realizes His own being, becomes conscious of Himself. This is the meaning of the common dictum of theologians, that God formed the world of nothing, the nothingness being in reality Himself.[1] The phenomenal world is eternal, but it is also created, the antinomy being necessitated by the nature of God and His relation to the universe. Although the whole framework and substance of his thought is ontological, Erigena recognises as fully as a modern physicist the order of the universe and the infinite multiplicity of its operations. The laws of the world are eternal truths. They all originate in God, who is the law of all laws, the reason of all reasons. An illustration of the process by which God becomes self-conscious in the phenomenal universe Erigena finds in the formation of the human consciousness, which in the act of conceiving creates; while he compares the countless ramifications of natural phenomena all deriving their being from God to the evolution of numbers, every number consisting of additions or variations of the initiatory unit. The laws of the universe are irreversible. God Himself cannot change them, because they are all irradiations or expressions of the Divine mind or will, for with God freedom and necessity, or being and willing, are one and the same. So solicitous is Erigena to preserve Deity from all imputation of mutability that he refuses to accord Him the category of motion, and therefore says that God cannot love, and that He cannot be loved, for either conception would imply movement.[2] Love is merely the passive principle which conjoins every part of the universe. At the same time the effective operation of God on the physical world is continuous. He is perpetually creating, realizing His own thought, or, in relation to the Logos, He is perpetually begetting in accordance with the old dictum of Origen—'Semper gignit Pater semper nascitur Filius.'

The knowledge of the phenomenal world is called physics. It investigates nature, on its sensible and intellective side. This knowledge is, however, superficial and imperfect. Phenomena tell us nothing of real truths. Every phenomenon is indeed an incomprehensible accident,[3] serving to hide and distract our attention

[1] *De Div. Nat.* iii. 22.

[2] St.-René Taillandier, pp. 102, 104.

[3] On account of their Skeptical implication the words are worth quoting: 'Quicquid autem in omni creatura vel sensu corporeo percipitur, seu intellectu confideratur, nihil aliud est, nisi quoddam accidens incomprehensibile per se, ut dictum est, uniuscujusque essentiæ.'—*De Div. Nat.* i. 3, and *passim*.

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from the essence or substance of things by obtruding on our senses their mere qualities and relations. We know nothing of what anything is in itself and apart from our modes of cognition. No doubt natural knowledge may be supplemented and corrected by higher sources of cognition, *e.g.* by Holy Scripture or the divinely imparted enlightenment of the mystic. Erigena thus seems to share in the dualism of Aquinas, which distinguishes between natural and supernatural knowledge, and he is so far a maintainer of double-truth. But it is not easy to reconcile with this discrimination his oft-repeated conviction of the Divine and autocratic character of all reason and its superiority to every authority, even of Holy Scripture itself. Perhaps we may take this as an instance of the inconsistencies remarked on by Dr. Hüber, in which the logical sequence of his thought is occasionally interrupted by the claims of ecclesiastical orthodoxy.[1] On the other hand, Erigena is careful to assert that Divine authority, even when legitimately alleged, must not be employed, he might have added, 'as it is by theologians,' to prevent independent research into the reasons of visible and invisible things. Indeed, St. Paul exhorts men to the study of things seen, on the ground that they lead up to the knowledge of things unseen. Man, therefore, by means of his senses is led up to God just as the creation leads us to the Creator.

The chief position in Erigena's physical universe is occupied by man: he represents the point of junction between the spiritual and material universe. On the one hand, his reason assimilates him with angels, heavenly spirits, and with God Himself; on the other, his body connects him with material existence. In virtue of this position man is a microkosm, in whom is found on a small scale a reflection of the whole universe. The Trinity finds a parallel in his mental faculties; the self-realization of Deity in creation is illustrated by the formation of his intellect, generated as it is by its own conception of ideas. There is no being, material or immaterial, which does not subsist in man: he sums up the universe. This dignity man derives by the subsistence of his own soul in the Divine consciousness, for 'the knowledge of things that exist (*i.e.* as existing) implies and causes their existence,' as Dionysius the Areopagite affirmed.[2] But as man's conceptions are real existences, the same attribute of reality must be assigned to his names. Erigena proves this realistic hypothesis by the

[1] Hüber, p. 252.

[2] 'Cognitio eorum quæ sunt, ea quæ sunt, est.' A clumsily worded assertion, which may be regarded as the *ne plus ultra* of ontology. Comp. St.-René Taillandier, p. 139.

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passage which represents God as submitting the objects of His creation to Adam, 'to see what he would call them.'

Few subjects show more forcibly Erigena's occasional embarrassment in reconciling with his scheme of nature the dogmas of the Church than his treatment of the Fall of Man. Not that his speculative ardour is the least impeded by the literal narrative in Genesis, for of that, as of all other inconvenient passages of Scripture, his allegorical method furnishes a never-failing solvent; but he seems especially awake on this point to the antagonism between his system and a prominent dogma of the Church. Erigena's conception of God required that His omniscience should not be frustrated by an event He could not control, and his monistic idea of the universe was averse to a recognition of evil as a positive entity. Besides which, there was an obvious incongruity between his contempt for matter and his view of the material universe being an emanation of Deity. Thus man before the Fall possessed no body, and his knowledge was then acquired not by the mediate instrumentality of the senses but by direct intuition. Beset by these difficulties—inseparable from the application of ontology to solve the problem of a material universe—Erigena minimizes the consequences of the Fall, maintaining boldly that evil cannot be said to exist except as the privation of good, and that man's reason, though injured, was only partially a sufferer for Adam's transgression.[1] I may add that our idealist has anything but a firm grasp of Adam's personality regarded as the common parent of mankind. He finds the first mention of man in an earlier passage of Genesis, viz. in the firmament which divides the upper from the lower waters—a symbol of man's position both separating and joining the two worlds of matter and of spirit.

As to man's power of acquiring knowledge and the validity of that acquirement, we have already noticed incidentally what Erigena's opinion seems to have been. The senses are unable to attain more than surface and unreal cognition, and their infirmity is not compensated by any external means of truth-discovery; nor outside of the reason and imagination is there any valid authority to which men may appeal. Ecclesiastical dogma, though awarded a kind of professional and customary deference, is distinctly subordinated to the dictates of reason and idealistic ratiocination. In the same spirit are treated the *dicta* of the Fathers, to whom he owes so much in the way of suggestion. The conflict between his reverence for his instructors and the irrepressible impulse of his

[1] *De Div. Nat.* iii. 35; comp. Hüber, p. 150.

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own independent reason is set forth in the following words, which I quote the more readily as they supply a clue to his standpoint in other cases of divided allegiance. 'It is not our part to judge of the intellectual conclusions of the holy Fathers, but to accept them with piety and veneration. We are not, however, forbidden to choose what on reflection may seem to accord best with the Divine utterances of reason.'[1] The same right of rationalistic selection is extended to Holy Scripture. Theoretically he maintains that Scripture is or contains the Divine utterance. Its teaching, together with the intuition of the mystic, he regards as superior to the instruction derived from nature.[2] It must, therefore, be received with submission, but the submission accorded to it by Erigena himself seems somewhat problematical. He points out that it has of necessity many and various senses; being as it is an emanation of the Divine mind, it must share with its companion-emanation, nature, the characteristics of diversity and multiplicity. Of its different senses Erigena prefers the mystical or symbolical as the essence of Scripture truth, of which literal interpretations are just as much a mask as are outward qualities in the case of physical phenomena. Its study demands therefore the exercise of reason and judgment; that condition of self-knowledge and mental independence which is itself the outcome of ratiocination. Nor again must Scripture be accepted as rendering needless research into the physical universe; for Abraham, long before Scripture came into being, found God by the course of the stars. Indeed, he frequently allows nature an entire equality with Scripture as a source of Divine light.[3]

Coming lastly to his 4th nature, we find that Erigena, like other thinkers occupying the same standpoint, was probably reconciled to the imperfections inherent in a material universe by bearing in mind its destiny—in other words, the final return of all created beings to God.[4] To his vivid imagination and spiritual aspiration the material world appeared to be passing through its predestined changes in its path to final absorption. It was needful that it should perish in order to be regenerated in the final cause of its existence, *i.e.* man; while in his turn man dies in order that he may be

[1] *De Div. Nat.* ii. 16.

[2] Comp. Hüber, p. 148.

[3] Hüber, pp. 130, 131, and Kaulich, p. 88.

[4] Ampère compares with this opinion of Erigena's the Hindu speculation of the return of all creation into the bosom of Brahma. But in truth Erigena's thought has many affinities with Hindu and Buddhist speculation. Sometimes these are so striking as forcibly to suggest a common origin. Comp. vol. i. p. 410.

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revivified, renewed, transfigured in the primordial causes existing in the *Logos*. That death which men die as terrestrial beings is the progress to a higher condition—reabsorption in the infinite reason. It is possible, however, to attain to this state of self-annihilation, like the Buddhist Nirvana, even in this life, by the sublime raptures of contemplation. This is the state of Divinely imparted knowledge in which Erigena, like other idealists, takes refuge from the doubt, mutability, and transitoriness of ordinary terrene existence. This is his sole conception of unquestionable knowledge. He looks forward, therefore, to a future in which matter with its illusions, dogmas with their materialistic self-contradictory implications, knowledge with its inevitable imperfections, shall be lost in the being of infinite, all-embracing truth. The irony of history often presents us with a singular, sometimes a most pathetic, contrast between the ideas and dreams of the solitary thinker and the grim actualities of his surroundings. I know few cases in which both the singularity and the pathos are more strongly marked than in Erigena's conception of the destiny of creation compared with its actual characteristics so far as man is concerned in the tenth century. Amid the wars, social disturbance, ecclesiastical bigotry and depravity, popular ignorance and misery, which are the most striking features of Christendom at the time, our Irish enthusiast is dreaming of a return of all things into the bosom of the Creator, prospecting a millennium of infinite knowledge, truth, and love.

Although Erigena's thought-system critically examined reveals inconsistencies, inseparable perhaps from an intellect more intuitive than discursive, these are fewer and less important than might be supposed: a general uniformity marks most of his speculations. Hence all his heresies, or rather his antagonisms to the dominant creed of Christendom, are so far the natural outcome of his idealistic principles that they might be easily inferred by any one starting from his own standpoint. Thus his conception of the Divine unchangeableness necessitates the inference that He can neither love nor be moved by love. For a similar reason he infers that God is in some respects both ignorant and impotent. His idea of the absolute sovereignty of God, as well as of the uniformity and spirituality of the course of His providence, readily accounts for his denial of evil and original sin, his belief in the salvability of devils, his refusal to admit the bodily resurrection either in the case of Christ or of men at the last day, and his interpretation of heaven and hell not as places but as states of consciousness. His repugnance to materialism induced a stress on

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the spiritual aspects of all acts of worship, and disinclined him to recognise in the sacramental elements anything more than the signs of a spiritual presence. His conception of the sum of existence as one indivisible nature forced him to allow that the physical universe, no less than Holy Scripture, was an efflux of the Divine *Logos*, while both his rationalism and mysticism compelled him to assert the superiority of reason and intuition to Scripture, and induced him to emphasize its allegorical signification. Some of the points just indicated show an affinity between Erigena's speculations and the advanced religious thought of our time. To these may be added his belief that rewards and punishments are inevitable self-evolved results of human action, not arbitrary sentences imposed by any external power, and his pithy distinction between physics and ethics—that the former investigates the phenomenal aspects of nature, the latter its rational aspects.

Erigena is a remarkable example of what I should term, in relation to ordinary Christian belief, metaphysical latitudinarianism. He possesses the intuitive imaginative type of intellect which does not oppose dogmas so much as transmute and reshape them. The aid which this mental idiosyncrasy affords to the realization of Free-thought is unquestionable. We can see at a glance how much liberty in respect of the usual dogmas of the Church Erigena derived from his idealism, and he supplies an example of the singular fascination of realism on some of the great thinkers of mediæval times. When we come to Ockam we shall see that its tendencies, when intensified, elaborated, and hardened into dogmas, its ideal creations transmuted into concrete facts, were mischievous, as all dogmatic determinations of uncertain things must needs be mischievous; but in Erigena the realism, though distinctly marked, is as yet in an earlier stage, and is characterized by freedom, spirituality, and plasticity. No distinction could be greater than that between the Deity of the popular Christianity of the ninth century and Erigena's half-Pantheistic conception. The former was a crude materialized anthropomorphic being, portrayed in early Christian art and conceived in Christian opinion as differing neither in 'body, parts, or passions' from one of the sons of men; while Erigena's view, whatever its defects on the score of distinct apprehension, was much more suitable to the infinite and eternal God. The idea which the Church had propounded of the nature and mission of Christianity was narrow, meagre, and unworthy in comparison of that engendered by

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Erigena's combined breadth and spirituality. The pious Catholic whose notion of the Supreme Being was derived from ecclesiastical paintings of a venerable old man seated on a throne with a Pope's tiara on his head, or whose conception of Christ was founded on representations of an infant in his mother's arms, would have had his horizon of spiritual apperception indefinitely enlarged by a perusal of Erigena's 'Division of Nature.' The same spirit of breadth and comprehension pervades, as we have seen, every portion of Erigena's Christianity. Hence, though he did not set himself against the dogmatic teaching of the Church, yet, by enlarging and refining, he did not leave a single article in the Apostles' Creed its ordinary acceptation. Immersed in his profound feeling, plunged, so to speak, in the fathomless ocean of human introspection, the popular faith became transformed. It might have been said of it—

> Nothing of it that doth fade
> But doth suffer a sea-change,
> Into something rich and strange.

Nor in view of the prevailing dogma-induration was Erigena's principle unimportant of making all the dogmas of the Church without exception the objects of ratiocination. The effect of ecclesiasticism had long been to assert its pronouncements as superior to and independent of reason; but with all his mystic idealism, Erigena was far too much of a rationalist to allow such a claim to pass unquestioned. Reason was too sacred, too closely akin to the Divine Logos, to have its dicta set aside by any authority. The results of his dialectic on the accredited beliefs of Christianity we have already noticed. However much he is thwarted in his efforts, his evident impulse is not so much to accept received dogmas in their ordinary form as to analyze and verify them, or, if approved, to mould them anew after his own mental image and likeness.

Another beneficial tendency of Erigena's thought, and generally of realistic speculation in the mediæval Church, was its protest against the growing materialism of the Christian creed. Whatever mischief may attach to vague, undefinable conceptions of religious truths—and I am far from denying that there may be such—they are infinitely exceeded by the petty materialism which must needs realize all spiritual beings and verities in some tangible form or visible aspect, or which insists on tying down all religious influences to different forms of matter. This is the evil which assimilates so much of Romanist worship to a materialistic Fetichism, and exercises so narrowing and benumbing an effect on its uncultured votaries.

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Philosophically considered, realism was a reaction from the crude materialism of the popular creed, the natural antagonism of metaphysical against physical religion. If it created idealities and supersensuous entities in lavish profusion, this was the inevitable result of its refusal to yield deference to inanimate matter. No consistent realist could have credited, *e.g.* the dogma of transubstantiation, or could have believed in the efficacy of relics and images. We shall, however, have to touch on this subject again. Mediæval theology did not attain its extreme grossness of materialization until after the time of Erigena. We had better, therefore, defer its consideration till we arrive at the predisposing causes of the Italian Renaissance.

With regard to Erigena's more distinctly marked Skepticism, it is evident his intellectual conformation was negative.

His favourite truths were generalizations attained by extreme abstraction. His idea of God, *e.g.* is obtained by eliminating all attributes and reducing His being to relative nonentity. His conception of man is an incarnation of the Divine reason, to be divested of all qualities and relations if we would attain a complete knowledge of him. His idea of the material universe is a progress from the absolute being that created to that in which it becomes absorbed. He shares the method common to extreme idealists and Skeptics of distrusting ordinary sources of knowledge. Whatever amount of dogma or definitive conviction his idealism might be credited with, it was founded upon a Skeptical basis, and it might be said of his system as of others similarly originated that the foundation was more real than the superstructure. Together with his stress on negative method must be included his perpetual use of disjunctive syllogisms, and his view of dialectic as the art of disputing. Not only, too, does he distrust the deliverances of the senses, but, as we have seen, human opinion, Church, Bible, all share more or less the same fate; and if reason seems to be specially reserved, we must remember that it is the somewhat peculiarly constituted reason of Erigena himself. A dualism is also perceptible in more than one direction of his speculation. Sometimes he makes the usual distinction between exoteric and esoteric teaching, as when he affirms that authority is the best mode of teaching for the ignorant, and reason for those able to employ it. Sometimes he affirms a higher and lower mode of cognition, as when he distinguishes between the natural and supernatural intellect; the latter being the intuition of the mystic, and constituting the sole infallible truth.

That the outcome of Erigena's speculation is destructive to

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the dogmatic teaching of Romanism has long been attested by a succession of adversaries from his own time to the present day.[1] It is difficult to name a heresy which the zealous partizans of Rome have not discovered in the 'Division of Nature.' Pope Honorius III., some two centuries and a half after its author's death, anathematized the work as the source of the Pantheism which prevailed in the thirteenth century. Still later Pope Gregory XIII. placed it on the Index. The reception it has thus met with from dogmatists and obscurantists may be taken as showing their estimate of its Free-thought tendencies both by direct teaching and by suggestion, nor are we able to say that this judgment, so honourable to Erigena, is ill-grounded.

Parting now from our representative of mediæval Idealism and Pantheism, let me revert for a moment to my bird apologue. As a thinker, Erigena's main characteristic, next to his love of freedom, is his inwardness. His thought-system is a kind of monody—a plaintive philosophical crooning of ideas and aspirations far removed from as well as immeasurably superior to his actual surroundings. He contemplates nature and Christianity from the standpoint of a poetic and fervid imagination. The teachings of these twin revelations are transmuted in the glow of his feeling and the depth of his spiritual insight into internal processes and truths. He takes refuge in his idealism as in a sacred holy of holies from the ignorance, barbarity, religious materialism, and bigotry of his time. He there revolves all problems and solves all difficulties. He finds rest only in the absolute, in which he so far loses himself that all limitation, quality, differentiation, disappears; and, like the bird, the result of his song is that the cage with its cruel bars, its narrow limits and other inconveniences, share the fate of so much else—they are reduced to nothingness.

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[1] Those who care to pursue the subject of Erigena's heterodoxy may be referred to Möller's work, *J. S. Erigena und seine Irrthümer* (Mainz 1844), the 'Commentatio de vita et præceptis J. Scoti,' prefixed to Floss's ed. of his works; Migne, *Patr. Lat.* cxxii. pp. 1–87; Dr. A. Stöckl, *Gesch. der Phil. d. Mittelalters*, i. p. 127; *Hist. Lit. de la France*, vol. v. p. 421, &c.

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Abelard.[1]

Few individual thinkers are better known, none have higher titles to their renown, than Peter Abelard; and yet his fame must be pronounced spurious, at least it is based upon what may be termed the accidental circumstances of his lot. It is rather as the lover of Heloise than the logician and Free-thinker that he is celebrated. The romance of his life has overshadowed and well-nigh annihilated its intellectual interest. M. Rémusat has indicated this truth with characteristic Gallican rhetoric when he sums up his career in the words: 'Il vécut dans l'angoisse et mourut dans l'humiliation, mais il eut de la gloire, et il fut aimé.' Whatever distinction may attach to the fact described in the last two words, they undoubtedly mark the chief source of Abelard's celebrity.

Now, were it in my power, I could wish to correct the popular estimate of this twelfth century Faust, so far as to show that his fame does not depend on his ill-fated connection with his Gretchen. Indeed, I am bound to confess that as a man, and in the relations of social life, Abelard does not stand very high in my estimation. He was selfish, cold-hearted, and ungrateful. His behaviour to his master, Roscellin, was marked with the same disregard of all feelings and interests except his own, which cha-

[1] The following are the authorities cited on Abelard:—

Petri Abælardi Opera, ed. Cousin. 2 vols. 4to. This edition is the one generally referred to, but the 'Sic et Non' is cited from the edition of Henke & Lindenkohl.

Petrus Abælardus, Hilarius et Berengarius Abælardi Discipuli; Migne, *Patrol.* tomus clxxviii. This edition is valuable as containing the works of Abelard's disciples.

Ouvrages Inédits d'Abélard. Par V. Cousin. 1 vol. 4to.

Fragments Philosophiques, Philosophie du Moyen Age. Par V. Cousin. Pp. 1–217.

Sti. Bernardi, Opera omnia, ed. Mabillon. 2 vols. fol. Par. 1690.

D'Argentré Coll. Judiciorum, vol. i. *passim.*

Hist. Lit. de la France, vol. xii. pp. 86–152.

Abélard, sa vie, sa philosophie et sa théologie. Par M. Charles de Rémusat. 2 vols. 8vo. Par. 1855.

Hauréau, *Hist. de la Philosophie Scholastique*, vol. i. last edition.

Kaulich, Dr., *Geschichte der Scholastischen Philosophie.*

Die Dogmengeschichte des Mittelalters. Von Dr. Josef Bach. 2 vols. 8vo.

Prantl, *Geschichte der Logik*, vol. ii. pp. 160–204.

Rousselot, *Études sur la Philosophie*, &c. vol. ii. 1–108.

Other works employed are referred to in the footnotes.

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racterized his conduct to his too faithful mistress, Heloise.[1] On the other hand, as an independent thinker, a genuine searcher for truth, Abelard deserves his fame. He was a rationalist and Free-thinker when both reason and free-speculation were proscribed. He dared to question ecclesiastical dogma when its arrogance and tyranny were at their height, and to be branded as a heretic when heresy involved the gravest possible dangers.

Abelard's position in the history of philosophy is precisely that which he has in our present subject. He represents the action of pure dialectic, just as Erigena typified the influence of idealism and devout imagination upon the dogmas of the Church. Abelard was an Aristotelian, as Erigena was a Platonist. The intellect of the former was discursive, while that of the latter was intuitive. No mediæval thinker is therefore so well fitted as Abelard to portray the struggle of rationalism with ecclesiasticism. He must always be regarded as the most striking example of that general movement of Free-thought which I have denominated the 'semi-Skepticism of the Schoolmen.'

We have already noticed the hostility of the early Church to the writings and methods of heathen philosophers. Now of the two chief schools of Greek thought, that of Plato and Aristotle, it might be said that their methods survived the knowledge of their actual works. In the 'dark ages,' when both the idealist and the dialectician were hardly more than the 'shades of great names,' the spirit which animated them—the respective directions of their thought-systems—were not forgotten; especially was this the case with Peripateticism. Logic, the instrument of reason, was soon recognised by the Church as its most potent enemy. No doubt both Platonism and Aristotelianism exercised in the long-run an influence adverse to dogmatic stringency and uniformity. For if the former dissolved the articles of the Christian creed in a tender glow of mysticism, and rendered their outlines indistinct by the agency of pious imagination, the latter made them mere *problemata*—theses which, however formally authoritative, were still objects of ratiocination. Of the two, the antagonism of the latter was the more direct and unequivocal, and this serves to explain the Platonic affinities of the early Fathers, who were desirous of finding some ground of *rapprochement* between heathenism and Christianity. Platonism even as a system had much in common with some of the chief dogmas of Christianity, while idealistic sentiment was a

[1] Comp. Roscellin's letter to Abelard in *Op. om.* (Cousin) ii. 792, and Hauréau's 'Documents Nouveaux sur Roscellin de Compiègne,' in his *Singularités Historiques*, pp. 216–30.

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mode of thought infinitely more plastic and amenable to manipulation than a stern self-reliant rationalism. Besides, the early Christian heretics had based their dissent from ecclesiastical dogmas upon grounds of reason and logic. It was therefore only natural that Aristotle and his method should have become the bugbears of so many of the early Fathers.[1] Men from whose liberal culture and appreciation of Greek thought better things might have been expected, conspired to taboo and to exhort others to renounce the Stagirite and all his works. 'The Christian,' according to Gregory Nazianzum, 'knew nothing of terms of speech, of the rhetorical arts and enigmas of Sophists; the objections, suspenses, or antitheses of Pyrrhôn; the solutions of Chrysippos's syllogisms; and the craftiness of Aristotle's craft.'[2] Some check, however, to this anti-dialectical prejudice was induced by Boethius's translation of the logical treatises of Aristotle, as well as by his application of dialectic to some of the chief doctrines of the Church. Christian theologians began to comprehend that if logic might be employed by heretics as the science of thought and reason, it might also subserve the purposes of dogma. In itself dialectic was only a method—the ordinary procedure of the reason, and was in theory independent of all conclusions. If Arius, *e.g.* had employed it for purposes of heresy, it might be used by his orthodox adversaries in placing their *credenda* upon a reasonable basis. One incidental result of this dressing up ecclesiastical dogmas in the garb of Greek dialectic was to impart to them a tincture of philosophy, and to prepare the way for that amalgam of philosophy and theology which we call Scholasticism. No doubt during the 'dark ages' Aristotle's logic shared the fate of all kinds of culture, especially of Gentile origin, but it sprang into renewed life with the revival of learning in the tenth century. The 'Trivium' required a knowledge of the elements of the Organon, and this formed the more important moiety of the curriculum in the schools of Charlemagne. Alcuin himself insisted that Christian dogma could not be comprehended without the help of Aristotle's categories,[3] so that the Organon came gradually to be regarded as a propædeutic to theology. To this, with other subsidiary causes, the influence of Abelard being one of the latter, we must attribute the advance of Aristotelian learning in the tenth and following cen-

[1] Comp. Prantl's collection of passages in his notes, *Logik*, ii. pp. 5 and 6.

[2] *Greg. Naz. Orat.* xxvi.

[3] *Op. om.* i. p. 704. Comp. Ampère, *Hist. Lit. de la France*, iii. 120; Tennemann, *Geschichte der Phil.* viii. pt. i. p. 45.

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turies. But the progress was soon opposed by the Church. One main feature of Abelard's heterodoxy was his allegiance to Aristotle; while after his death the anti-Aristotelian feeling greatly increased. In 1209 the great Stagirite was transplanted somewhat curiously into the category of a Christian heretic, and his works were condemned to be burnt. Four years later, this prohibition was renewed with regard to his metaphysics and physics, while the logical treatises were allowed to be taught in the schools. In 1231 Gregory IX. reversed this decree of the University of Paris, and forbade altogether the reading of Aristotle 'until he could be corrected.' [1] But, notwithstanding ecclesiastical opposition and repression, Aristotle and his works continued to flourish. To the stream of Western Peripateticism was added the Eastern confluent, which took its rise in Arabic culture. Translations of new works from Greek, Arabic, and Syrian sources continued to be made.[2] Aristotelianism participated in the general awakening of the Renaissance, now commencing in France and Italy. It acquired no small support from the general recognition of double-truth, inasmuch as it formed the authoritative antithesis to the dogmatic teaching of the Church. Finally, in 1366, the opposition of the Church could no longer be maintained, and the cardinals delegated by Pope Urban V. to reform the University of Paris expressly permitted the reading of most of Aristotle's writings. An opportunity for considering the further progress of Aristotelianism in its decline and fall will be afforded us when we come to Peter Ramus.[3]

Returning now to Abelard, this great dialectician of the twelfth century was born in 1079, in Le Pallet, in Brittany. His parents were of noble descent, and he, like other scions of noble houses, was destined for the profession of arms. This profession he may be said to have pursued, but in a different manner from that intended by his parents. His life was a warfare, in the interests of Free-thought, with most of the established systems of his time, philosophical as well as theological. After his home

[1] D'Argentré, i. p. 132; comp. Dr. Schneid's work cited in the following note, p. 23.

[2] On the whole subject see Jourdain, *Recherches sur les trad. d'Aristote*, chap. iii., and Dr. M. Schneid, *Aristoteles in der Scholastik*, pp. 8–44. The latter writer belongs to a school of modern liberal Catholics, which is anxious to prove that the real reason of the Church's opposition to Aristotle was its enlightened zeal for his textual purity. Comp. p. 24. The hypothesis has certainly the merit of novelty. Perhaps, after this, we shall be told that the reason why the Church places independent works on her Index is entirely on account of their *critical* deficiencies.

[3] Comp. chap. on Ramus in a subsequent volume.

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education he seems to have started, like a philosophical knight-errant, on his travels, prepared to cope with the giants of dogma, prejudice, and falsehood, wherever he might discover them. While yet a youth, he came under the teaching of Roscellin, the celebrated nominalist and heretic,[1] and received from the quickening influence of his teaching an impetus destined to affect more or less the whole of his subsequent thought.

About the year 1102 Abelard came to Paris, whose schools—for the University did not as yet exist—were the rendezvous of all the youth of Europe. There he came in contact with William of Champeaux, the disciple of Anselm, and the greatest realist of his time.[2] Abelard began to attend his lectures, and was at first disposed to receive his teaching with submission, if not with actual concurrence. But, as he himself naïvely expresses his innate restlessness and critical forwardness, 'he did not long remain quiet under his shadow.'[3] The student soon became not only the critic but the adversary of the master. With his keen insight into the implication and sequence of philosophical principles, he discerned the remote consequences of extreme realism, and knew how to refute them by reductions to absurdity.[4] He thus not only disconcerted his master, but compelled him to alter his opinions. Nor was this the whole of his triumph: he assumed the office of a rival teacher, and in that capacity drew off the followers of the great realist, and made them disciples of his own.

Abelard was now, in his early manhood, a professor and lecturer in philosophy in the greatest seat of learning in Europe, and his doctrine soon matured into the particular form which rendered it obnoxious to orthodoxy; and when he applied it later in life to theology, brought on him the condemnation of two Church councils, and the undying fame of a Free-thinker and heretic.

To this method, as the matter of our chief concernment, we will now turn.

The chief feature in Abelard's intellectual standpoint is its complete independence. He belongs, properly speaking, to no

[1] New light on the subject of Roscellin and Abelard's intercourse is thrown by the above-quoted article in Hauréau's *Singularités Historiques*. The learned author places the date of this intercourse about the year 1096, and its place in the little town of Loches, in Tourraine (pp. 228–29).

[2] On Abelard's intercourse with this teacher, comp. Rémusat, vol. i. pp. 11–29, and the Abbé Michaud's *Guillaume de Champeaux*, chap. viii. pp. 220–35.

[3] Rémusat, i. p. 36.

[4] Comp. Hauréau, *Hist. de la Phil. Scol.* i. p. 366.

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school. He has been declared a nominalist, more generally proclaimed a conceptualist, traces of realism are occasionally perceptible in his teachings; but in reality he was neither one nor the other, or rather all three are found in different proportions in his intellectual conformation. True, he admitted that universals were in words, or rather in their mental concepts, and did not exist outside the mind, but he nevertheless regarded words as inherently adapted to express such generalizations, and therefore possessing a potency other than that assigned them by conventional usage. Thus he defined a universal as 'what is fitted naturally to be predicated of many things,'[1] not that the generalization or logical judgment contains the thing, for it *contains* only the thought, but it treats of and refers to things as such, *i.e.* as external realities passing into the stage of mental concepts.[2] His position might, perhaps, be defined as nominalism passing into conceptualism, but always qualified and corrected by an appeal to actual facts. This standpoint, as Dr. Prantl points out, is confirmed by an epitaph, probably composed by a disciple who appears to have entered thoroughly into his master's method. As the Latin is easy I need not translate it:—

Hic docuit voces cum rebus significare
Et docuit voces res significando notare.
Errores generum correxit, ita specierum
Hic genus et species in sola voce locavit
Et genus et species *sermones*[3] esse notavit
Significativum quid sit, quid significatum
Significans quid sit prudens diversificavit.
Hic quid res essent, quid voces significarent
Lucidius reliquis patefecit in arte positis
Sic animal nullumque animal genus esse probatur
Sic et homo et nullus homo species vocitatur.[4]

[1] Prantl, *Logik*, ii. p. 174.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 185: 'Das Urtheil aber sodann *enthält* nicht die Dinge, sondern enthält den Gedanken, hingegen *handelt es über die Dinge*, nicht aber etwa indem es die Dinge bezeichne, sondern indem es den vom Denken erfassten Zusammenhang der Dinge mit dem Creationsprocesse enthält.' Prantl thinks that in this distinction between *enthält* and *handelt* consists the centre-point of Abelard's philosophy, and that by missing it the French scholars have exaggerated his conceptualism.

[3] On the peculiar sense of *sermo* in Abelard's philosophy, comp. Rémusat, ii. p. 103. It implies the word (λόγος) in its discursive, conceptual, and denominative aspect. It therefore comprehends the distinctions of the two following lines: the *significative*, or the word, the *significatum*, or the thing signified; and the *significans*, or person naming. Comp. Prantl, ii. 184.

[4] Rémusat, ii. 104; Prantl, ii. 187.

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Prantl remarks that Abelard's position is characteristic of the eclecticism of his time. That there are grounds for the assertion we have already seen, but I contend that they really prove not what eclecticism mostly implies—a desire to converge and amalgamate divergent standpoints—but a determination to remain aloof from all of them. The very position of a conceptualist—and Abelard was more this than anything else—implies self-reliance, a stern individualism which makes all knowledge radiate from its own centre. In his case this philosophical egoism was only qualified by a direct appeal to truth and external reality. Names, with all their admitted power, their innate fitness for predication, derived their value from their expressing real things; to use his pregnant phrase, they were 'natures designated by names.' Here again, therefore, there was an appeal to external truths. We may also note, as illustrating Abelard's stress on individuals not only as objects but as subjects of knowledge, that he suggests the addition of 'individuum' as a sixth to Porphyry's Five Predicables.

Abelard's real mistress, therefore, was reason, regarded in the double aspect of a Divine faculty, and reasoned (verbal) discourse. Dialectic as its instrument was queen of all sciences. To Aristotle, as its great human legislator, deference must be paid. 'Nothing,' he exclaimed in an access of peripatetic fervour, 'is valid against Aristotle,' except, we must needs add, the well-founded and verifiable reason of Abelard. For with reason we must combine, in Abelard's standard of truth, reality. Abstractions were only false and delusive, unless authenticated by things. It was not enough that they should take their departure from things, nor even that they should be founded upon things [1]—the extremest abstractions of the realists claimed some connection with external objects—but they must be continually verified and authenticated by collation with the outer world. This indissoluble connection of words and things, and the *à priori* and semi-divine fitness of the former to stand for the latter, is a fundamental point of Abelard's system which must not be lost sight of. Thus, to take an example, the universal 'humanity'—a term 'born' to include conceptually the different individuals of the human race—could only be true when verified and its legitimacy ascertained by reference to the human units of which it was ideally composed. The same vivid sense of truth and reality also ruled his conceptions of

[1] Rémusat defines Abelard's 'universals,' 'expressions de conceptions fondées sur les réalités,' i. p. 34.

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theology. He was not content to receive the usual definition of God as a nexus of incompatibilities, but he aspired, by the aid of reason, to realize His being in a form agreeable to his intellect. Hence his efforts, as we shall by-and-by see, to define the Trinity so as to preserve intact the undivided Unity of God. Hence, too, his stress upon rationalistic interpretations of other ecclesiastical dogmas by which the moral conceptions of mankind appeared somewhat strained. As he collocated, according to the epitaph above quoted, words with things, so he similarly conjoined the doctrines of the Church with natural and reasonable views of the course of Divine Providence and the character of the Deity.

But even this stress on reality is only another form of his high estimate of reason. For external reality, like truth of every kind, is apprehensible only by the reason and by the instruments she employs for its determination, though from another point of view reason herself (conceptualism) is conditioned to a certain extent both by language and by external phenomena. Abelard calls dialectic, as I have said, the queen or mistress of all things. She possesses more than a mere human character. When we find, he says, that Jesus Christ, the Word of the Father, is in Greek called *Logos* and the Father's 'wisdom,' that 'science seems especially to pertain to him which by name and derivation is styled Logic. For as Christians are so called from Christ, so from λόγος is logic properly derived. So much the more truly are lovers of that science called philosophers as they are more genuine admirers of that higher wisdom'—a thought which Abelard shares, as we have seen, with Erigena. But if the instrument and essence of knowledge—for reason (λόγος, *sermo*) is both one and the other—be thus Godlike and Divine, the excellency of knowledge itself cannot be overrated. All knowledge, says Abelard, is good and sacred. No man would dare to call any knowledge evil, not even that which concerns evil, for a good man needs the knowledge of evil in order to avoid it. There is no criminality, he elsewhere remarks, in knowing, but only in doing, and it is to action that all evil must be referred—a dictum that may be compared with his definition of heresy, viz. that 'it consists, not in ignorance, but in obstinacy.'

On the other hand, Abelard's predilection for reason must not be overstated. Though the sole method of truth, reason was not infallible, any more than the reality of external phenomena was absolute. In singular things truth was obtainable by questioning—the activity of reason, of which dialectic was the law; and the preliminary of questioning was doubt. In his logical writings

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also, Abelard asserts that view of the science which regarded it as purely critical or discriminative. He shares, according to Prantl, the conception of it maintained by the Stoics and by Cicero, which was largely Eristic, and which made probability rather than certainty its ultimate goal. Abelard, too, makes categorical judgments premisses to hypothetical, assigning to the latter only the attribute of necessary truth. Though he believes words to be naturally qualified to express things, he holds, not quite consistently, that they are imposed by human convention, and in the necessary relation they bear to men's minds, that their significations must be various. He also distrusts human opinion, and contrasts it to its own disadvantage with the pronouncements of the individual reason. A practical proof of this distrust is his own isolation from all the leading philosophies of his time. We shall find shortly that he occupies a similar position with regard to the dogmas of the Church. In a word, Abelard displays in his method and intellectual character most of those instincts and tendencies we have learnt to identify with Free-thought.

It may be said of many thought-schemes that they are clearer in application than in method. Abelard's is one of these. To define precisely and completely his philosophical standpoint from his logical writings is not easy, but we gain a pretty clear insight into his intellectual formation when we examine his chief theological works, viz. the 'Sic et Non' and his 'Introduction to Theology.' Abelard tells us that he was urged by his disciples to turn his attention to theology. We may fairly surmise that the advice was unneeded. He had already put to flight the philosophical schools of his time, and, like another Alexander, he desired new worlds to conquer, but only theology was left. Accordingly he determined to try what effect the free-inquiry he found invincible in the schools would have on the dogmas of the Church. No doubt he knew that he was venturing on sacred ground, but to his Breton impetuosity a spice of danger acted more as an incentive than as a deterrent. He had vanquished Roscellin and William of Champeaux, and thereby had attained European reputation. Might he not be able to conquer also the champions of the Church, *e.g.* a St. Bernard? At least he was quite ready to enter the lists. The work in which he does this, and which may be taken as a general index of his position to every kind of established doctrine, is the celebrated 'Sic et Non,' or 'Yes and No.' Hauréau ingeniously supposes that it was Abelard's reply to the ordinary ecclesiastical demand, lately emphasized by Anselm, of

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unconditional, uninquiring belief.[1] Whether so intended or not, it certainly subserves such a purpose; the very name of the book considered as a theological treatise was, his enemies alleged, monstrous and unheard of.[2] Who before Abelard had ever conceived the authoritative utterances of the Church to be fit objects for dialectical exercitation? Who besides him would dare to make the great mysteries of Christian theology, the prime articles in her creed, mere shuttlecocks perpetually knocked to and fro by the counteraction of divergent authorities? The whole policy of the Church had been to assert an unconditional affirmation. She had announced her dogmas as eternal verities that permitted no shadow of hesitation—not to say negation; whereas the very title of Abelard's work postulated an indifference between affirmation and negation. No doubt dialectic had already been applied to theology. Every attempt to co-ordinate the beliefs of the Church into a harmonious system presupposed ratiocination of a certain kind. The arguments of heretics, the replies of the orthodox, postulated some recognition of reason. But the subordination of dialectic to theology as the slave to her mistress was a fundamental principle the Christian hierarchy never lost sight of; whereas the peculiarity in Abelard's new standpoint was the equal indifference (theoretically) of affirmation and negation. It seemed to pronounce the validity of suspense even in matters of theology, and to claim for doubt a share in the determination of dogma.[3] Nor does Abelard attempt to blink or disguise this position. The keynote of the work is contained in its remarkable prologue. Here Abelard propounds, as the justification of his work, his own suspensive attitude in face of conflicting determinations. He is compelled, he half satirically remarks, to have recourse to the opinions of others, both by reason of his own incapacity to enounce what is true, as well as by the antagonisms he finds in authoritative writings. Not that such diversity, however, is displeasing, for in all things, as Cicero remarked, 'uniformity or identity is

[1] *I.e.* Crede ut intelligas, *Hist. de la Phil. Scol.* i. p. 384.

[2] William of Thierry, in his denunciation of Abelard, thus speaks of the titles of some of his writings: '*Sic et Non*, *Scito te ipsum*, et alia quædam de quibus timeo ne sicut monstruosi sunt nominis sic etiam sint monstruosi dogmatis.'—Rémusat, ii. 178.

[3] Rémusat maintains that the purport of the *Sic et Non* is not Skeptical but controversial (ii. p. 171), but he forgets that the admission of free controversy into dogma has an implication distinctly Skeptical. Comp. his further remarks, p. 179. Cousin has rightly apprehended the Skeptical nature of the *Sic et Non*; see his summary, *Ouvrages Inédits*, Introd. p. cxci.; so also has Dean Milman in his *Latin Christianity*, vol. iii.

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the mother of satiety; in other words, it generates repulsion'[1]—a naïve admission which throws a flood of light on Abelard's intellectual idiosyncrasy. It is right, he thinks, that there should be a divergency of words in relation to the same subject-matter, because such a characteristic harmonizes with the diversity of moods, aspects, qualities, and relations to which they are applied, as well as with the infinite variety of minds that use them. Every man must admit how rash it is to judge of the meaning and understanding of another from his words, their precise intention being known only to omniscience. Nor are we able to pin our faith on writings purporting to be authoritative, for oftentimes apocryphal works are falsely called after some distinguished name. Indeed, we find discrepancies even in Scripture, as, *e.g.* the different time of the Crucifixion given by Matthew and Mark, and the thirty pieces of silver mentioned by the former evangelist, but which are not found in Jeremiah but in Zechariah. Self-contradictions abound also in the writings of the Fathers, as we see in Augustine's 'Retractations.'[2] In the Gospels, too, we find another phenomenon—the opinion of men deliberately preferred to actual truth, as in passages which term Joseph the father of Jesus Christ; so that human opinions are in all things diverse, just as natural phenomena are diverse, while truth remains hidden and the same. Abelard produces many examples of this distinction between truth and human opinion out of sacred and profane authors, and in the usages of common speech. It is because men must needs have recourse to opinion—truth being unattainable—that Abelard thinks right to set before his readers the catena of divergent authorities contained in the 'Sic et Non.' There would soon, he wisely observes, be an end of controversies if men would agree to recognise the inevitable nature of such divergences, and if we were able to defend the use of the same words with different implications.[3]

It follows from these premisses that a final determination of a controversy by means of reason cannot be expected, *i.e.* in beliefs externally imposed. We must, therefore, compare authorities, and retain what seems to us best. Conflicting opinions, even in an

[1] *Sic et Non* (Henke et Lindenkohl), p. 2. The maxim also occurs elsewhere in Abelard's writings, *e.g.* in his 'Introd. to Theology,' *Op. om.* (Cousin) ii. 92.

[2] *Sic et Non*, p. 7. Comp. Cousin, *Ouvrages Inédits*, Introd. cxcii.

[3] *Sic et Non*, p. 10: 'Facilis autem plerumque controversiarum solutio reperietur, si eadem verba in diversis significationibus a diversis auctoribus posita defendere poterimus.'

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inspired writer, ought not to surprise us. It is evident that the gifts of prophets and holy men varied at different times, and we may be certain of finding their various moods represented by corresponding expressions. Even assuming that we find in them an unworthy concession to another's weakness, we must remember that God judges men more by their intentions than their actions, or, if they enunciate what seems demonstrably false, we dare not accuse them of falsehood, for, as Augustine admitted, no man can be accused of falsehood who utters what he believes to be true. Lastly, the exercise of one's own individual judgment in all difficult questions, if a painful, is a wholesome, intellectual labour. Both Scripture and the Fathers enjoin us to this work. 'He who reads many books,' says Jerome, 'is like the man who is well versed in coins, and who can readily detect a false piece of money or wrong inscription;' and St. Paul tells us that we are to 'Prove all things and hold fast only to what is good.' Abelard concludes his prologue with a few sentences which seem worthy of translation. 'After these preliminary remarks we will commence, if you please, to collect the various *dicta* of the Fathers as they occur to memory, presenting the question of which they seem to treat from a different aspect. This method may incite young readers to a greater effort of search for truth, and may make them more acute in the inquiry. Perpetual or frequent questioning is, indeed, defined as the first key of wisdom; and Aristotle, that most perspicacious of philosophers, in his "Predicament of Relation" exhorts students to its earnest acquisition, saying: "Perhaps it is difficult to determine confidently of such things unless they are often treated." Doubt, in any case of particular things, will not be useless. By doubt we attain to inquiry, and by inquiry we perceive truth, according to the saying of Him who is very truth, "Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." This lesson He also taught us by His own example, when at twelve years of age He was willing to be discovered sitting in the midst of the doctors and asking them questions, presenting to us the likeness of a disciple by His interrogation rather than that of a master by His instruction, although He shared the full and perfect wisdom of God. Since also there are other passages of Scripture pointing in the same direction, they ought to excite the reader, and attract him to truth-search so much the more as the authority of Scripture is esteemed the greater.'

When we pass from the prologue to the work itself, we find the individual freedom and independence on which Abelard insists abundantly exemplified. A number of theses are propounded on

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every conceivable subject connected with theology and morality, while around each are concentrated admitted authorities both for and against. Thus he adduces evidence that faith should be based on human reasons, and the contrary; that God alone ought to be believed, and the contrary; that the Divine Persons of the Trinity differ among Themselves, and the contrary; that even philosophers have believed the Trinity or the Word of God, and the negative; that nothing happens by accident, and the contrary; that our first parents were created mortal, and the negative; that Christ, after His resurrection, showed cicatrices, not wounds, to His doubting disciples, and the contrary; that without baptism no one can be saved, and the contrary; that James I., the brother of our Lord, was the first Bishop of Jerusalem, and the contrary; that marriage is good, and the contrary, &c. These propositions, amounting in all to 158, Abelard throws down like a challenger's glove at a tournament, to be decided among a number of well-known writers, both Christian and heathen, for Ovid,[1] Virgil, and Seneca are adduced by the side of Christian Fathers and bishops. But in every case the problem remains unsolved; whether the *sic aut non*, the 'ay' or the 'no' 'has it' is left to the reader's own judgment and discrimination. All that Abelard professes to do is to produce authorities, to juxtaposit their various deliverances, to give materials for judgment and selection; indeed, the very motive of his work would have been rendered nugatory had he undertaken to guide the inquirer in his choice; while his own standpoint of indifference would have made such an undertaking self-contradictory and impossible.

We must not, however, suppose that the general result of Abelard's 'Sic et Non' is an open denial of Christian doctrine. In most cases the so-called negative of the thesis is not the logical contradictory of the affirmative. Oftentimes it is only a variation, and that not profound, of the orthodox formula or the accustomed standpoint. No doubt a bigoted and narrow-minded dogmatist would esteem the variation as heretical as a more pronounced opposition, and probably more seductively dangerous. This was the view which St. Bernard took of Abelard's teaching. Its ground principles of rationalism and individualism were more prejudicial to ecclesiasticism than even his actual conclusions. The main issues of the 'Sic et Non' were undeniable, too much so for the application of its own 'yea and nay' argument. Abelard

[1] 'Un seul poëte,' says Cousin, 'est cité, et ce poëte est Ovide, et Ovide dans *l'Art d'aimer*.'—*Ouvrages Inédits*, Introd. p. cxc.

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had dared to apply to theology, without qualification or restriction, the Dialectical method of philosophy: the authoritative dicta of the Church were set forth as objects, not of passive acquiescence, but of inquiry—not as determinate, infallible propositions, but as approximations more or less to a given standard or formula. This was, in effect, a return to Erigena's maxim of the identity of true religion and philosophy. Abelard not only reasserted that principle for others, but made it the common basis of his method. His relation to the Church and her various authorities exemplified in the 'Sic et Non' had already been foreshown in his attitude to realism, conceptualism, and nominalism. He had no more idea of contravening of set purpose the dogmatic system of the Church, than of denying that either of the great Scholastic methods might not have its measure of validity. 'Sic et Non' was the Skeptical instrument he had applied to Roscellin and William of Champeaux. All he wished for in theology, as in philosophy, was to assert that measure of independence that best agreed with the free exercise of his reason. A further outcome of the 'Sic et Non' was to suggest that complete identity of faith among thinking men—even if desirable, and Abelard, as we have seen, thinks it is not—is utterly impossible. Neither the nature of words in formal confessions of faith nor that of minds permits such a dogmatic uniformity. In a word the 'Sic et Non' is a manifesto of Free-thought, not, indeed, unconditional, but extensive, a proclamation amid the comparative darkness of the twelfth century of the rights of human reason, a precursory and unhappily abortive claim of the religious liberty which marked the Reformation.

Abelard has been styled the Sokrates of the twelfth century. The appropriateness of the name is justified by the 'Sic et Non.' In method and object the work resembles the Sokratic 'Dialogues of Search.' Both the Greek and the Breton philosopher were animated by the same impatience of the real ignorance and fancied knowledge of men about them. Under different conditions of life and civilization they discovered the same passive, indolent acquiescence in long-accepted formulas and definitions of truth. Both thinkers are anxious to train men in the exercise of independent thought. Both regard truth, not as superior to, but as the issue of criticism and verification. Both regard dialectic as the most potent instrument for attaining this purpose. Both disclaim for themselves absolute knowledge of truth, and *à fortiori* any direct purpose of communicating truth. In one respect they differ, and the difference illustrates the distinction between an age of comparative Free-thought and one of dogma and ecclesiastical repression. The only

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limits Sokrates acknowledged were those imposed by the laws of reason, while Abelard, notwithstanding his deference to reason as 'the mistress of all things,' only dared to assert that measure of liberty which is evolved and justified by clashing authorities.

As representing his method and intellectual idiosyncrasy, the 'Sic et Non' is the most important of Abelard's works; but it is in no sense a systematic treatise. It partakes of the discursive character of the 'Quodlibetæ'—those informal receptacles of the odds and ends of mediæval thought of which it might be styled the literary precursor. To obtain some knowledge of the practical application of his method to theology we must turn to the more important of his dialectic treatises, I mean the 'Introduction to Theology.' Here the great dialectician sketches a scheme of rationalistic doctrine intended as a kind of prolegomena to the study of Scripture. He defends his project by its obvious utility and by alleging the insistency of disciples who were continually urging him to give them some guidance in theology as he had in philosophy. The value of such an attempt is shown by the need which theology, in common with every branch of human science, must have of dialectic, 'the mistress of all knowledge.' The enemies of Christianity employed dialectic to attack her, and Abelard is anxious to show that the same weapon in skilful hands may be wielded for her defence. Indeed, the greater the difficulties which beset Christianity, the greater ought to be the support accorded it by reason.

Man's salvation, according to Abelard, depends upon three things: faith, love, sacraments. Faith is the conviction of the unseen, as truth is the conviction of the seen. Among the dogmas of the Christian faith, the chiefest is that which affirms the nature and attributes of God, *i.e.* the doctrine of the Trinity. 'Christianity holds,' says Abelard,[1] 'that there is but one God, the only Lord of all, sole Creator, principle, light, sovereign good, infinite, omnipotent, eternal, one in substance, immutable and simple in essence, in Whom can exist no subdivision or anything which does not share His own existence, possessing in all respects undivided unity excepting in what pertains to the diversity of Persons. For in this simple, individual, and pure substance, the Christian faith truly admits three Persons altogether coequal and coeternal not in number but in diversity of attributes, viz. God the Father, as it is said, and God the Son, and God the Spirit proceeding from both. One of these Persons is not the other, though He may be what the other is. Thus the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Holy Ghost, but the Son is equally what

[1] *Op.* (Cousin), ii. p. 10.

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the Father and Holy Ghost are, being one in nature and one in number, as well as one in substance. This distinction of Persons arises from the diversity of their properties, just as one man differs from another personally and not substantially.

Such, in terms, is Abelard's doctrine of the Trinity, which he proceeds to expound and illustrate. For 'what is the use,' demands our rationalist, 'of speaking of doctrine unless it is explained so as to be comprehended?' It is precisely in this effort, so characteristic of himself, that Abelard excites the distrust and indignation of the dogmatists of his time. As a rule we may estimate the extent of a man's secret devotion to reason by the anxiety he manifests to account for, or at least to illustrate, the mysteries of his faith, to bring them within the limits of the verbally comprehensible. Every such attempt to the genuine dogmatist is fraught with danger. What right has a man even to wish to understand the authoritative utterances of the Church? It is sufficient that he accept the customary formula and ask no further. That such an imposed dictum may be self-contradictory or even palpably absurd is so far from being disadvantageous—rather the reverse. The very impulse of reason to inquire is repressed by the startling non-rational form of the dogma presented for its acceptance. Besides, men commonly accept these self-contradictions as necessary constituents of a mystery. Not so Abelard. He applied his dialectic to the usual ecclesiastical definitions of the Trinity, and pointed out the consequences of such an application. He desired to prove that the self-contradictions in the dogma were either destroyed or at least greatly minimized by his own interpretation. We shall presently see what reception this rational theology was destined to receive at the hands of extreme dogmatists. What they especially resented was Abelard's latitudinarian construction of the doctrine; his determination to find illustrations and analogies of it in nature; his appeal to Gentile teachers for its confirmation; his identification, *e.g.* of the second Person with the νοῦς of Greek philosophers, and of the third Person with the 'anima mundi' of Platonism. This tendency to place Gentile on a level with Christian authors is indeed a general characteristic of his method, but it was regarded with so much suspicion by the leading hierarchists of his time,[1] that he always thinks himself compelled to apologize for

[1] William of St. Thierry wished that Abelard 'would read the gospel of God with the same predisposition (benevolentia) with which he read Plato' (quoted in Bach's *Dogmengeschichte des Mittelalters*, vol. ii. p. 44); and Bernard observes that 'in labouring to make Plato a Christian, he proved himself a heathen.'

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his Catholicity. For this purpose he quotes Jerome's exhortation not to despair of the salvation of all the philosophers who lived before Christ, Augustine's admission of the religious and moral restraints inculcated by philosophy, as well as Plato's recognition of the propriety and efficacy of prayer. Abelard pleads that the light that illumined the Gentiles—the prior and universal Revelation, belief in which he shared with many of the Fathers—was in certain respects fuller than that which lightened the Jews; for the Sibyl's prophecy of the birth of Christ was more explicit than the vaticinations of Jewish prophets.[1] He finds the mystery of the Christian Trinity in ancient philosophers and poets, especially in Plato and Virgil. That Plato especially should have shared the Revelation of Christianity appears to him most reasonable, for, as he expresses it, it was just that the greatest of philosophers should bear witness to the supremest manifestation of Divine wisdom.

No small part of the first book of the Introduction is taken up with these ethnic confirmations and illustrations of Christianity, especially of the doctrine of the Trinity. These appear to have induced the accustomed suspicion, and Abelard commences his second book with a reiterated apology for his Gentile sympathies. He especially disclaims the imputation of Neology preferred against it. He urges that Moses was indebted to Gentile wisdom. Solomon distinctly recommended the cultivation of knowledge. St. Paul had cited Epimenides, Menander, and Aratus with the object of converting the Athenians. Abelard would right willingly make heathen learning serve the interests of Christianity. Alluding to the permission given to a Jew to marry a foreign slave after her head had been shaved, he says,[2] 'Thus I love heathen learning for her grace and her beauty, and from being a slave, a captive stranger, I would fain make her an Israelite.' It is observable as showing the extent of the erudition of the twelfth century, for it is universally admitted that Abelard was cognizant of the whole Scibile of his time, that with all his love of Gentile philosophers he knows little of their actual writings; his citations from them being derived from the Fathers, especially St. Augustine.[3]

No inconsiderable part of the second book of the Introduction

[1] Comp., on Abelard's belief in a universal revelation, Rémusat, ii. pp. 409, 410. His Free-thought on the relation of Christianity to Judaism and Gentilism finds most forcible expression in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, a work which Rémusat describes as one of the fairest monuments of genuine Christian rationalism.—Rémusat, . p. 407.

[2] *Op. om.* (Cousin), ii. p. 63.

[3] Rémusat, ii. p. 199.

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is occupied with a noble vindication of knowledge, and a defence of its unrestricted communication. Abelard is the apostle of knowledge, as his great enemy, Bernard, is the champion of obscurantism. He has a firm, invincible belief that all knowledge is not only justifiable but deserving commendation. This indeed is a corollary from his rationalism. If the instrument were in its nature and origin Divine, it would be unseemly to blame the legitimate issue of its activity. While ecclesiasticism had long forbidden Christians to read the works of heathen authors and books on secular subjects, Abelard boldly avowed his conviction that the learning of no art or science ought to be prohibited to a religious man.[1] A rule of proportion might, he admits, be granted in this as in other matters, affirming the superiority of one kind of literature over another; but with this reasonable restriction the whole field of knowledge should be thrown open to the inquirer. Harm in knowledge- or truth-ascertainment is to Abelard, as I have already remarked, an inconceivability. Indeed, the knowledge of evil is itself not only beneficial but necessary; for without such knowledge obtained beforehand, how could men avoid it? Evil lies not in knowing or speculating, but in action. Were all knowledge evil, it would be impossible to absolve omniscience from its taint. Science in its fullest acceptation is illimitable, for it is 'the comprehension of all things that exist,' and is, therefore, the peculiar prerogative of Him who is 'the plenitude of all knowledge.' The property which God has in knowledge is further shown by the appellation given to the Holy Ghost, who is called by one of His titles, 'the Spirit of Knowledge.' As to the evil of knowledge, it is at most an incidental perversion; both the power and knowledge of evil are equally advantageous if used with discretion. 'We, therefore,' exclaims Abelard, 'approve of all sciences while we resist the fallacies of those who would abuse them.' 'They err,' says Cicero, 'in no small degree who blame knowledge for the vice of man;' and there is no kind of science that may not be turned to ill uses. Secular knowledge is indeed of peculiar advantage to those who intend ultimately to confine their studies to sacred subjects, for after their conversion the measure of Divine Grace bestowed upon them seems proportioned to the extent of their intellectual acquirements. Thus Paul the Apostle, though not in merit above Peter, yet after conversion had more grace in doctrine, in the same ratio as he possessed a greater knowledge of literature. To blame philosophy for the pride of its students, and

[1] *Op. om.* ii. p. 71.

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to confound knowledge with its misuse, is, according to Abelard, to invoke the denunciation of the prophet against those 'who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness.'

Thus Abelard inveighs against the bigoted ecclesiastics and obscurantists of his time, those who, to use his own satirical phrase, 'found solace in their ignorance:'[1] while they in the true spirit of sacerdotalism deplored the audacity of the human reason, distrusted its impulses, distorted its conclusions, stigmatized its activities together with their results, as alike impious; acted towards it, in short, like a tyrannical despot towards the meanest of his slaves. Abelard, as an apostle of enlightenment and free-thought, lifted up his solitary voice in behalf of the God-given faculty, asserted the sacredness of knowledge as well as of its instrument, denounced the iniquitous but interested machinations that traduced the greatest of God's gifts, and was bent on perpetuating ignorance, superstition, and intellectual stagnation as the supremest attainment of humanity.

One main point of Abelard's introduction, still further illustrating his implicit trust in reason and in the inherent virtues of truth search, is his theory of belief, and as a result his definition of Revelation. Why should men, it might be asked, adhere to Christianity? The customary answer of the Church was, because it is a Revelation of God: man must believe what God asserts, and because He asserts it. To claim the exclusive right of affirming what the Divine dictates might or might not be was the very essence of ecclesiasticism. But Abelard was averse to taking anything on trust. No mere *ipse dixit*, claiming authority as such, satisfied him. He not only questioned the dictum, but altered its terms into an opposite implication. 'We believe what God says not because He says it, but because we are convinced of its truth by our own reason.'[2] The immediate import of such a bold assertion was immense. It was nothing less than a death-blow to dogma and sacerdotal dictation. The independence of reason, the supremacy of its criticism and verification, was announced unconditionally. All the dogmas of the Church were thereby deprived of their inherent validity, and were submitted for authentication to another and independent tribunal. Nor was its ulterior purport of less consequence; it was equivalent to the proclamation of Protestantism and the right of private judgment; it affirmed the main

[1] He uses the phrase repeatedly; comp. *e.g. Op. om.* ii. pp. 73, 77.
[2] *Op. om.* ii. p. 79.

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principle of the Reformation some four centuries before the time of Luther. That the outcome of such a maxim was denounced as Skeptical is only what might have been expected. In truth, the standpoint which Abelard thus took up against mediæval Christianity resembled the attitude of Greek Skeptics against Greek dogmatists, for in both cases belief was proclaimed not on extraneous authority but on internal conviction. Abelard supports his position with most of the arguments generally employed for the purpose. He quotes Ecclesiasticus xix. 4 ('He that is hasty to give credit is light-minded,' &c.) to show the mischief of credulity. He points out that unless this antinomy of the 'verifying faculty' be conceded there can be no criterion or appreciation of truth, and therefore no reliable truth at all. That a sense of truth (rationality) should be in some degree a universal possession, is more in accordance with reasonable conceptions of God's goodness and His impartial government of the universe than that it should be restricted to particular times and peoples. Indeed, without this universal possession more or less of mankind, all attempts to convert the heathen world would be bootless, and the Church would seek in vain to fulfil her divinely ordained mission. Nor does this definition of the true basis of conviction imperil genuine faith; on the other hand, it propounds its commencement. Faith, according to Abelard, is the estimate or appreciation of the unseen. It is not the condition of the passive receptivity generally described and desiderated by theologians, but an intelligent conviction founded upon and fortified by ratiocination, and by—what he always includes under the head of reason—the faculty of devout imagination.[1] No other definition of faith could discriminate between truth and falsehood, or between religion and superstition. We find that Abelard's conception of faith, as implying criticism and discrimination, was one of the incriminated features in his belief against which Bernard took especial exception.

The aim of the introduction is proclaimed in the same undogmatic terms as that of the 'Sic et Non.' Abelard disavows the intention of teaching truth; his object is only to defend it, to attain to that measure of probability which seemed to possess most affinity with human reason.[2] He takes up the weapons of reason and Free-thought against those false philosophers and

[1] Comp. his definition of reason, *Op. om.* ii. p. 115. When Dean Milman describes Abelard's character as 'utterly unimaginative,' he greatly exaggerates what was undoubtedly a defect of his mental conformation.—*Lat. Christianity*, iii. 263.

[2] Rémusat, ii. p. 200.

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heretics who had employed them against the faith. He is desirous to show that reason is an instrument as well adapted to defend as to attack Christianity, and he protests against the monopoly generally accorded it for the latter purpose. He replies to a supposed objector who suggests that the Christian faith had been already sufficiently vindicated and asserted by pointing out the divergences of opinion still existing in the Church, and he believes in confuting heretics by persuasion, not by force. That mysteries exist in the Christian creed Abelard is forced to admit. He quotes with approbation and repeatedly the oft-cited maxim of Gregory the Great, that if all mysteries were comprehensible faith would be needless, but he does not allow such an admission to repress his search for truth. Hence he declines to acquiesce in the conclusion of some thinkers that the Trinity, *e.g.* was a dogma that could only be understood in a future life. Such a proposition appears to him a sharing of the Montanist heresy, which held that the sacred writers communicated their teaching in ecstasy, not knowing what they said.

Given the publication of two such revolutionary works as 'Sic et Non' and the 'Introduction to Theology' in the twelfth century, and the fate of their author would not be difficult to forecast. Abelard's conduct, no less than his writings, had throughout his life manifested that resolute independence which is of all human attributes the most obnoxious to sacerdotalism. It was, moreover, his fate to come into personal conflict with Bernard, a born dogmatic and hierarchical fanatic, just as Abelard was a Free-thinker and liberal-minded philosopher. The two men emerge from the comparative darkness of the twelfth century as renowned champions of rival causes, which had already begun to divide between them the interest and power of Christendom. They were typical embodiments—one of faith, the other of reason; one of sacerdotalism, the other of enlightenment. Bernard looked back with fond yearning to the ages of faith and intellectual submission, of whose approaching disappearance he saw no insignificant symptoms. Abelard looked steadily forward to the future of light and liberty which seemed ready to break over Europe, and of which the actual dawn was even now dimly perceptible in Italy. Through his friendship with Arnold of Brescia[1] Abelard can claim a relation direct and intimate

[1] Comp. Bernard, *Op. om.* i. 182; *Ep.* 189. He seems to allude to some intercourse between Abelard and Arnold, in the following choice

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with those noble aspirations for freedom, political and ecclesiastical, which filled the minds of the teachers of the Italian Renaissance. Though living two centuries before Dante and Petrarca, he must have shared their intellectual hopes, desires, and sympathies. Bernard, on the other hand, rages impotently against the audacity of the human intellect. 'It usurps all things, leaves nothing to faith, lays its hands on what is highest, and defies that which is stronger than itself,' &c.[1] Of this revolutionary spirit Abelard appeared to him the especial incarnation. He was the Goliath of the new hordes of Philistines which threatened the armies of the Church, and Arnold of Brescia was his armour-bearer. The danger from this foe of ecclesiasticism was the greater in proportion to his celebrity. Long ago Abelard had achieved a renown without example in mediæval times, and which has been compared to the European reputation of Voltaire. For this he was indebted partly to the fame of his unhappy romance, but very largely also to his Free-thought. His works were read everywhere, even—as Bernard bitterly complains—in the Papal Curia itself.[2] It was of no avail that Abelard had been condemned as a heretic by the Council of Soissons in 1120 and his books ordered to be burnt. To the freer intellects of his time his heresy was a recommendation, and the committal of his works to the flames an imprimatur of their especial value. Since that date Abelard's fame had increased, and with his fame his philosophical indifference to purely ecclesiastical interests. Bernard compared him to the hydra, because for one head of heresy the Council of Soissons had cut off he had since shot up and developed seven others. Nor did Abelard spare his clerical enemies. He launches his invectives against the bishops, exposes their ignorance, their hatred of learning, their fictitious miracles, and their other unworthy means of maintaining their absolute ascendency.

At last the constrained relations between Abelard and Bernard developed into open warfare. Relying perhaps on the presence of influential disciples and friends, Abelard appealed to an assembly of bishops about to be convoked at Sens, offering to submit his writings to their judgment. But the friends of Bernard were on the alert, and Abelard discovered that he had placed the cause of Free-inquiry before a tribunal altogether hostile

simile: 'Sibilavit apis quæ erat in Francia api in Italiâ, et venerunt in unum adversus Dominum et adversus Christum ejus.'

[1] Bernard, *Ep.* 188; *Op. om.* i. p. 181.

[2] See his *Epistle* above quoted, 188.

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to its claims. Without caring to defend himself before enemies who were resolved on his condemnation, though their intoxicated state made its articulate enunciation a matter of difficulty,[1] he appealed to Rome. Here also the issue of his appeal was unfavourable. Bernard was at this time in the very zenith of his power, and possessed more influence in Europe than even the Pope himself: moreover, Innocent was a personal friend of the Abbot of Clairvaux, so that unless his friends in the Roman Curia were more numerous than we are aware of, it seems difficult to see the prudence of the course adopted by Abelard; but for some reason he appears to have expected a different result, and his consequent disappointment accelerated his death.

But the Council of Sens is important to us as bearing on the nature and extent of Abelard's Free-thought, for it is admitted by the fairest of his modern apologists that the various points 'articled and objected' against him by Bernard may be legitimately deduced from his writings. Of the seventeen counts of his indictment fourteen were admitted to have been proved. In these Abelard was held to have been guilty of the chief misbeliefs which from its earliest development had distracted the Church. We may glance at a few of these incriminated opinions by way of epitomizing the chief directions of his Free-thought.

Abelard's primary deviation from ecclesiastical orthodoxy for which he had been condemned at Soissons, as well as at Sens, was connected with his interpretation of the Trinity. Not that he disputed the dogma, but he claimed the right of explaining it so as to make it more comprehensible. He refused to grant—the standpoint of extreme dogmatists—that the presentation of a religious truth was most acceptable to humanity when formulated in terms the most opposed to human reason. Accordingly he so stated the doctrine as to allow a subordination of persons in respect of origin and substance, and he manifested a tendency to resolve the distinction of persons into a difference of attribute or property.[2] Bernard, moreover, disliked Abelard's illustrations of the Trinity. They

[1] See Berengarius's vivid description of the drunken, semi-somnolent condition of Abelard's judges, *Op.* ed. Migne, col. 1859, and comp. Milman, *Lat. Christianity*, iii. p. 265.

[2] For a full exposition of Abelard's doctrine of the Trinity, comp. Rémusat, ii. p. 363, &c., and Baur, *Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit*, ii. p. 462, &c. Baur admits that Abelard's distinction of persons is purely nominal (p. 477). On the Romanist side comp. Stöckl, *Gesch. der Phil. des Mittelalters*, i. p. 235, &c.; *Hist. Lit. de la France*, xii. pp. 119, 148, &c.; and Dr. Bach, *Dogmengeschichte des Mittelalters*, ii. p. 51, &c.

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were attempts to prove what he would rather have had left as inscrutable mysteries, although Abelard was in this respect only following a precedent left him by all the Fathers of the Church.[1] One of these was specially offensive. This was what Bernard termed[2] the 'execrable similitude or rather dissimilitude' of a brazen seal, but Abelard does not seem to have intended more by it than to describe, perhaps more vividly than the case admitted of, the subordination in nature of the Divine Persons nearly as stated by the Council of Nice. He designated the three Persons, objecting, however, to their *numerical* differentiation,[3] as power, wisdom, and goodness. He maintained also that the Trinity was one in operation, and must also be one in invocation.[4] His design clearly was to emphasize the unity of the Godhead, and thereby to protest against the crude Tritheism into which the doctrine of the Trinity had degenerated in the Church, and which in the present day even characterizes too many Trinitarians.

The same intention marks another of Abelard's imputed heresies. The incarnate Son of God *as such* cannot be called a Person of the Trinity. This relation He can only claim as being the word or wisdom of the Father.

Abelard's doctrine with respect to the Holy Ghost was violently impugned by Bernard. His identification of the third Person with goodness was declared by his adversary to imply an exclusion of the properties of power, wisdom ascribed to the Father and the Son; this too, notwithstanding the fact that the Trinity of power, wisdom, goodness had long been a commonplace of patristic theology. More open to doubt on the score of rigid orthodoxy was Abelard's assimilation of the Holy Ghost to the 'anima mundi' of Plato. Here Bernard's reproach might seem to have some ground, that in 'trying to make Plato a Christian he had only succeeded in proving himself a Pagan.'

I have already alluded to Abelard's definition of faith as estimation, intellectual appreciation. Its drift undoubtedly was to impart into the idea a certain measure of rationality, of criticism, of volition, to make it less the blind impotent subservience to eccle-

[1] See on this point Rémusat, ii. 314–16.

[2] Comp. Bernard's *Tractatus de Erroribus Abælardi*, *Op. om.* i. 639, 640, &c.; Rémusat, ii. 334.

[3] 'Non numero rerum sed pluralitate proprietatum,' *Op. om.* ii. 10. In denying number in its ordinary sense to the Trinity, Abelard errs in good company. Cf. Rémusat's learned note on the point, ii. 191.

[4] 'Sicut trium personarum est indivisa operatio, ita et eorum sit inseparabilis invocatio.'—*Op. om.* ii. 16.

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siasticism than its ordinary acceptation had rendered it. But the attempt was odious to a fanatic like Bernard, who thus describes its effect: 'As if every one might think and say what he pleased, or as if the sureties of our faith depended uncertainly on vain and various opinions, and was not rather founded on certain truth.'[1] 'Perish the thought,' he adds, 'that the Christian faith should have such limits. These are the appreciations (probabilities) of the Academics, whose creed is to doubt of all things, to be certain of nothing.' Bernard here displays, I may parenthetically observe, the usual inconsistency of the *odium theologicum*, for he elsewhere reproaches Abelard with too great positiveness in his opinions: 'Who of all things in heaven above and in the earth beneath deems himself ignorant of nothing, excepting only his own *nescio*.'[2]

In defining the relation of God to man, Abelard insists on the Divine impartiality and human freedom. God does not do more for the man who is saved than for the man who is not saved. By his own innate freedom and the impulse of his reason man may search for and obtain grace, so that it is not needful that a *specially* Divine impulse must be supposed in order to account for his incentive or for its success. Here too we may detect the attempt to reduce supernaturalism to the customary laws of Divine Providence, as well as to free Deity from the imputation of favouritism which, as a primary article of the Christian creed, has probably done more mischief to genuine Christianity than all the Skepticism with which it has ever had to contend.

Another of Abelard's inculpated opinions related to the Atonement effected by Christ's death. As might be inferred from his general intellectual tendency, he lays especial stress on its moral aspect. Christ saves us by His example, by those perfections of which He has given us a Divine pattern, and by the love which such a sacrifice is naturally adapted to create. He rejects the theory of vicarious substitution as contrary to human instincts of justice.[3]

He is also inclined in the very interests of the Divine perfection to limit God's omnipotence. Had God been able to create a universe in which evil would have been impossible He would doubtless have done so. Abelard on this point is an optimist. He is persuaded that this is the best, if not of conceivable, yet at least of

[1] See his *Epistle to Innocent*, ii., *Op. om.* i. col. 649.

[2] *Op. om.* i. col. 644.

[3] Comp. Rémusat, ii. p. 411, &c., and Baur's *Christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung*, pp. 194, 195, &c.

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possible worlds. Moreover, evil has oftentimes its mission for good. The blessings of the Atonement, for example, were secured to man by the envy and malignity of the Jews who crucified Him.

Finally, our rationalist believes that sin lies not in the act, but in the will and intent, or rather in the wilful consent to sin.[1] Hence, sin is annulled by the ignorance, &c. of its perpetrators. The Jews, for instance, who put Christ to death were not blameworthy, for they knew not what they did. Abelard also holds that there is no transmission of Adam's guilt to his posterity but only of the penalty entailed by it.

The general import of these teachings, regarded as thought-tendencies, we can have no difficulty in apprehending. They are utterances of a theology which, if not based upon, is controlled by reason. They indicate a resolve to harmonize as far as possible the orthodox formulas of the Church with the imperative demands of human consciousness, experience, and moral sense. They signalize an opposition to some of the most cherished methods and influences of sacerdotalism. That such an attempt should have succeeded was too much to expect. The forces against which the champion of Free-thought 'set the battle in array' were too powerful to yield to his isolated attack, well planned and resolute as it undoubtedly was. Victor in the Schools, Abelard was worsted in the Church, and the vanquisher of philosophical heroes like Roscellin and William of Champeaux was forced to yield to a monkish obscurantist like Bernard, backed by the enormous influence of the Papacy. But if Abelard was persecuted, condemned by two councils, compelled to burn his books with his own hand, enjoined to perpetual silence, and finally 'done to death' by his clerical opponents,[2] it must be admitted that their antagonism had not been unprovoked. In addition to a method —diffused by his renown throughout Europe—which established reason on the throne so long occupied by ecclesiastical autocracy, Abelard was not blind to the demerits of his opponents, nor sparing in his exposure of them. He inveighs against their opposition to enlightenment, ridicules the 'solace they found in ignor-

[1] See Rémusat's exhaustive account of Abelard's Ethics, vol. ii. chap. vii. p. 451, &c.

[2] With Abelard's long and bitter experience of the *odium theologicum*, we can hardly be surprised to find him admitting that he was often minded to leave Christendom, in order, as he ironically phrased it, 'that he might lead a Christian life among the enemies of Christ.'—Rousselot, *Études*, ii. p. 5.

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ance,' makes their credulity the outcome of a narrow intellect, contrasts their morality unfavourably with that of heathen philosophers, exposes the trickery and deceit by which their overwhelming power was attained. No priestly craft was more potent in the twelfth century than that which created and maintained false miracles. The flagrant imposture of these appeals to popular superstition he discloses in terms which have not yet lost their significance for priest-ridden communities. He unveils the pretensions of St. Norbert and others to cure slight cases of sickness by secretly mixing drugs with the patient's food or drink, withal pretending to cure them solely by their prayers. If the cure was accomplished it was held a proof of their own sanctity or the efficacy of their prayers; if not, it demonstrated the patient's own want of faith. Abelard ridicules the conduct of these saintly quacks by recounting the anecdote of an astute secular brother who recommended a female whom he had known in better circumstances, and who was begging alms of him, to practise the art of curing diseases by herbs as a lucrative profession. He bade her gather all kinds of herbs for the purpose, and assured her that if her medicaments succeeded her reputation would become spread abroad; if they failed, she could attribute the failure to the fatal character of the disease, and urge that against death all medicines are powerless.[1] Other superstitions of the time as well came in for his castigation. He agrees with the great humanist, Petrarca, in reprobating the claims of judicial astrology. He denies that the stars have power to predict the future, and says that the pretender to such stellar lore ought to be regarded not so much as an astronomer as a diabolical person.[2] The slight esteem in which he held mediæval legends is shown by his ridiculing the claims of the monks of St. Denys to have been founded by Dionysius the Areopagite.

Like other Free-thinkers, Abelard is inclined to go back to the origin of Christianity for the truth and simplicity he failed to find in the overgrown dogmatism of the mediæval Church. It is remarkable that throughout his works he invariably speaks of Christ as 'Truth' or 'Very Truth,' and he pays a deference to the utterances of Christ which he does not extend to any mere human authority.[3]

[1] *Op. om.* i. 590, 591. [2] *Ibid.* p. 650.

[3] See, by all means, the remarkable work, *De Inquisitione Summi Boni*, *Op. om.* ii. p. 715, &c. Here Abelard praises those Christians 'qui non a philosophis aut Judæis Christum ignorantibus aut reprobantibus sed ex ipso Christo veritatis doctrinam acceperunt. Ipsum audite, ait Pater Cælestis. Ipsum audite, aio et ego vobis quicunque me auditis. Ipsum

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All his proposed modifications of dogma—and Abelard's heresies are no more than that—point in the same direction of a wish for greater simplicity, rationality, humanity, in their authoritative formulation. More truth and less sophistry, more reason and less authority, more freedom and less dogma, more evangelical Christianity, less ecclesiasticism, represent the chief object of Abelard's aspirations, the goal of his intellectual efforts.

Abelard must be pronounced a martyr of Free-thought. Though he did not share the fate of his works in being burnt as a heretic, he was nevertheless hunted to death by his implacable foes the clergy. After the unfavourable issue of his appeal to Rome, which appears to have greatly disappointed him, he wrote an apology,[1] which is not a retractation, but a defence of his views. The language of this document bears evidence to the mental serenity which always attends assured conviction, nor is its closing appeal to his great enemy Bernard without a dignified pathos—'If there be therefore any consolation in Christ Jesus, if any bowels of mercy, I entreat your fraternal piety, lest any one by staining with infamy my innocence, which love for truth redeems from crime, should come short of charity. It is, however, part of charity not to receive an accusation against a neighbour, to interpret doubtful things to his advantage, and always to attend to that maxim of Christian duty, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned."'[2] To add to the effect of his apology, and to prosecute his own cause before the Pope, Abelard started for Rome; but on his road he was seized with the premonitory symptoms of his last illness. He turned aside to the Abbey of Clugny, where he was received with all honour by Peter the Venerable, one of the most estimable characters of the time. Here he remained for some months as a simple but studious monk, until his illness

audite potius quam paganum philosophantem vel hebræum Judaizantem. . . . Ipsum audite Consiliarius est, Ipsum audite Præceptor est . . . Si vultis scire quid sit summum bonum, vel qua via sit ad illud progrediendum Ipsum audite dicentem "Ego sum Via et Veritas et Vita." Nam via qua itur, et Veritas ac Vita quo itur Ipse est: Ipsum audite . . . Legem naturalem quam paganus philosophus defendit, Ipse docet, Ipsum audite. Legem Moysi venit implere non solvere Ipsum audite.' Among the many appeals to Christ from the slavery of dogma and ecclesiasticism with which Christian literature abounds, it would be difficult to find one more direct or more eloquent than that of Abelard's, with its plaintive refrain 'Ipsum audite.' Compare, on same subject, Rémusat, ii. 222, and note.

[1] *Op. om.* ii. p. 739. [2] *Ibid.* p. 722.

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compelled his removal to another monastery, where he died in 1142. While under his charge Peter the Venerable exerted himself to obtain some kind of reconciliation between the moribund philosopher and his ecclesiastical foes. In this he was successful. In the decrepitude of a premature old age Abelard had lost somewhat of the resilient energy and vivacity which incite men to controversy. He was wearied with the incessant struggles, the recurrent defeats and disappointments, that rewarded the searcher for truth and freedom in an age of superstition and mental servitude. Bitterly does he bemoan his fate, though in his wailing a Promethean undertone of defiance of his enemies and contempt for their unwisdom is distinctly perceptible. He can never be brought to see that his attachment and deference to reason, the divinest of human faculties, is a crime against the Giver and Source of all reason. Among the last words he addressed to Heloise was a confession of faith pronounced by Rémusat 'noble and affecting,' and which Dean Milman declared would have 'satisfied the austerest orthodoxy.' This commences with the words—'Heloise, my sister, once so dear to me in the flesh, now still dearer in Christ Jesus, logic has made me odious to the world, for perverse and perverting men whose wisdom is perdition say of me that I am famous in logic, but am grievously mistaken in St. Paul. Affecting to praise my intellectual power, they rob me of my purity of faith. It is, I think, prejudice rather than wisdom that thus estimates me. I would not be a philosopher so as to be opposed to Paul, nor would I be Aristotle to be shut off from Christ.'[1]

Abelard also recognises the lesson of his career that the time in which his lot was cast was unfavourable to intellectual liberty. The principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, authorities who dictated human beliefs as well as governed all human actions and interests, were too omnipotent to have their power questioned or its source examined by the Free-thinker or Rationalist. Abelard's recognition of this truth is pathetically manifested in his advice to his son to be more eager to acquire than communicate knowledge—

Major dicendi tibi sit quam cura docendi.

The usual gagging precept, we may term it, of an intolerant and Philistine epoch. Doubtless a little more observance of that salutary if not very noble maxim, a little more reticence, somewhat less too of what Milman satirically calls 'his imprudent

[1] *Op. om.* i. 680; Rémusat, i. 230.

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passion for truth,' would have rendered his life easier and perhaps happier. But, in sooth, such wishes are unreasonable and absurd. Abelard's career, as the pursuit of that policy he recommended his son, is inconceivable. Nor must we regret his fate. It is the common lot of all independent thinkers in periods when free speculation is deemed a crime. I have already compared him to Sokrates. Alike in mental idiosyncrasy and aspiration, as well as in influencing the whole thought of their time, they also resemble each other in their final destiny. The Skepticism of Sokrates led to prison and death. The rationalism of Abelard led to his condemnation at Soissons and Sens. Thus history, in strange unforeseen ways, continually repeats itself. The Christian bishops at Sens were the lineal intellectual successors of the Athenian Dikastery that put the hemlock cup into the hands of Sokrates. The pious obscurantist Bernard may claim kindred with the heathen zealot Meletos. The theatre and accessories are different, with the broad distinction of sundered centuries: the drama, the actors, the plot, are in reality the same.

Nor is this all: Abelard also resembles the greatest of Hellenic thinkers by his confidence in the future. If Bernard and the other ecclesiastics of the twelfth century had proved too strong for him, he was no less certain that the future was his. Probably one of his last works in his retirement at Clugny was the revision of those theological writings that had stirred the world and brought so much obloquy on their author. If so, they do not disclose the least symptom of submission or repentance. In no case does Abelard alter the passages condemned at Soissons and Sens in the sense required by his enemies. What the exact nature of the reconciliation brought about by Peter the Venerable between Abelard and his adversaries was, we cannot tell; that it was a renunciation in terms of his expressed opinions is, however, certain. To a man possessed of Abelard's indomitable spirit, and his firm persuasion of the supremacy of reason, no repudiation of well-considered views would have been possible, except that equivocal submission to wanton and arrogant power ascribed by tradition to Galileo—that which is followed by a half-whispered '*E pur si muove.*'

Leaving now Abelard, I will glance for a moment at my bird parable. Abelard fitly symbolizes and illustrates the action of the human reason in its perpetual attacks on ecclesiastical autocracy. His object, we have seen, was not to oppose Christianity so much as to reform, simplify, and liberalize it. The caged bird did not so much wish for absolute freedom without, as enlarged limits, more

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freedom of movement, within his prison-house. As we have seen, the contest was unequal. With broken wings and ruffled plumage, but with still undaunted courage, it was compelled to desist from the struggle; but the traditions of freedom survived him. Other birds of the same disposition secured in process of time, by persistent attacks on the bars of their cage, an enlarged space within, as well as, for those who desired it, free egress into the purer air and limitless expanse without.

. . . . . .

Aquinas.[1]

To a considerable share in the religious intuition of Erigena, and a still greater proportion of the dialectical genius of Abelard, add an intellectual capacity, a multifarious learning, a many-sided sympathy greater than either of these possessed, but allow for a sense of intellectual congruity far inferior to theirs, and the result would be—Aquinas. He represents the class of intellect in which synthesis preponderates largely over analysis, and in which certitude is obtained not so much by eliminating so much as by minimizing discordant and antagonistic beliefs. He is an admirable illustration of the mental freedom which comes from eclecticism, from a thoughtful and genial appreciation of varying currents of thought, from a conviction of the multiple aspects of truth. The highest effort of his intellect is not a single determination, an arbitrary and infallible definition of truth, as much as a careful equipoising of its different constituents. For Aquinas, truth, like virtue, is a mean between two or more extremes.

Born about the year 1227, in Sicily, near the town of Aquino, St. Thomas, like Abelard and his own master Albert the Great, was descended from noble parents. Little that is both authentic and deserving of record seems to be known of his youthful life. At an early age, and in opposition to the wishes of his parents, he joined the Dominican order, and soon after went to the schools of Paris. After a short stay there he left for Cologne, where he fell

[1] Besides the general works on the Scholastic philosophy noted under Erigena and Abelard, the following are the special authorities employed or referred to on the subject of Aquinas:—

Opera Omnia, ed. Parmæ. 25 vols. folio. But the 'Summa Theologica' is quoted from the more convenient edition in Migne's *Patrologia*.

La Philosophie de Thomas d'Aquin. Par C. Jourdain. 2 vols. 8vo.

Histoire de la Philosophie Scholastique. Par B. Hauréau. Seconde Partie, Tome Premier (1880).

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in with his master Albert the Great. In 1245 he accompanied him to Paris, where Albert had been appointed to lecture on the Sentences. The intercourse of 'the great' master and his still greater pupil, like every portion of Aquinas's life, is surcharged with stories of a more or less legendary character. The best known of these is the anecdote in which Albert forecasts the brilliant future of his disciple. On account of his silence and the sombre meditative expression of his features, his fellow-pupils had nicknamed him 'the Great Dumb Ox of Sicily'; but when on a certain occasion Aquinas had acquitted himself admirably in solving some hard questions of his master, Albert took the opportunity of prophesying that 'a day would come when the bellowings of the dumb ox would be heard throughout the world.' Having finished the three years' course of teaching imposed on him by his superiors, Albert returned to Cologne, whither Aquinas accompanied him. The latter, however, went back to Paris in 1252, and, having taken his degrees, commenced to give public lectures. About this time also he began that career of writing which is still the marvel of the world by its fecundity. After a stay of some years in Italy, where he was continually and arduously employed in teaching, he returned to Paris in 1257, and took his doctor's degree. From that date to the end of his life his time was taken up with his teaching and with the composition of his *magnum opus*, the 'Summa.' He died prematurely of over-work, in March 1274, leaving behind him the deserved celebrity of being the greatest theologian of the Romish Church.

Aquinas may be said to represent at its highest point of development that alliance of Aristotle with ecclesiastical Christianity traces of which we have already observed in Abelard. Aristotle was his authority in philosophy, as the Christian Church was in theology. There is thus a dualism in the first principles of his thought which is clearly manifested in his writings. Dialectic, the method of reason, is admitted to be also the method of theology. Christian dogmas the most sacred and most authoritative are regarded not only as absolute verities, but as questions to be investigated and determined so far as possible like ordinary truths. This at least is Aquinas's starting-point. How it becomes finally modified we shall shortly find. We can, however, already infer that Aquinas was a rationalist, or rather, perhaps, a semi-rationalist. No man could lay the stress he does on syllogistic methods and reasonings who had not a bias towards reason as the faculty of truth-discovery. Not that Aquinas, of all the Schoolmen, stood alone in this matter. Professedly, at least, all maintained the high

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prerogative of reason. There was no difference in this respect between realists and nominalists, or between Scotists and Thomists. All were ready to make the teachings of the Church more or less subservient to reason. All were ready to preface its dogmas with an *Utrum*,[1] and to conclude them if possible with a Q. E. D. Aquinas's chief distinction was the unusual emphasis he placed on Aristotle and Peripateticism. Other Schoolmen were content to take the great Stagirite for their dialectic teacher, accepting his method and applying it to theology, but Aquinas accepted not only the method but, wherever possible, the conclusions of Aristotle as well. Doubtless this unusual partiality for Aristotelianism was explicable on grounds quite compatible with his orthodoxy. He might have urged, for instance, the proselytizing complaisance of St. Paul and said, 'To the Greeks I became as a Greek, that I might gain the Greeks.' In fact, this very plea has more than once been put forward in his behalf. 'According to you,' says the 'Christian Sokrates' of Balzac,[2] 'has not God sent St. Thomas to the Peripatetics of these times in order to deal with them according to their own humour, to convert them in their own fashion, to gain them by their syllogisms and their dialectic? This St. Thomas of the Schools, has he not been chosen the Apostle of the Aristotelians, who have never as yet been thoroughly tamed and subdued?—a presumptuous and mutinous race, which defers so little to authority, always seeks to base itself upon reason, is continually demanding Why a thing is? is so impatient of repose, such an enemy to peace, so inclined to novelties.' No doubt this was Aquinas's mission regarded from his own standpoint, but it is one that bears on the face of it marks of vacillation and incertitude. The very attempt to present the foregone and long-established truths of Christianity in the form of syllogisms savoured of Skepticism. The simple collocation of reason and faith as coequal or rival coefficients of truth itself imperilled

[1] The 'Utrum' of some of the Schoolmen is equivalent to the more Skeptical 'Non potest probari' of others. In Duns Scotus, *e.g.* we find the following 'Not Provens:' 'Non potest probari Deum esse vivum—sapientem—intelligentem—volentem.—Non potest probari productio personarum divinarum in essentia divina.—Unam personam esse in alia probari nequit.—N. p. prob. animam rationalem esse immortalem, per consequens n. p. pr. resurrectio, nec vita æterna bonorum, nec pœna malorum.—N. p. prob. nos nasci cum peccato originali.—N. p. prob. Deum oportere pati propter peccatum homini remittendum.—N. p. prob. Deum oportere incarnari, &c.' Cf. Maywald, *Lehre von der zweifachen Wahrheit*, p. 19.

[2] *Œuvres de J. L., de Guez de Balzac*, par L. Moreau, vol. ii. pp. 40, 41.

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the claims to absolute supremacy which faith had always asserted. Hence Aquinas's 'Summa'—the text-book of Catholicism—is a legitimate successor of the 'Sic et Non' of Abelard and the 'Sentences' of Peter Lombard, and, like those famous treatises, is better adapted for raising than for settling disputed points, whether of belief or of practice.

But if Aquinas's position was imperfect from a dogmatic point of view, it had its corresponding advantages as a mode of Free-thought. It was a distinct introduction into theology of the principles and procedures of reason at a time when that faculty was most enslaved by sacerdotalism.[1] Both Aquinas and his master Albert are indeed striking instances of the liberalizing, humanizing influences of the amalgamation. Both were essentially broad thinkers, when breadth and comprehension were the highest excellences of which Papal Christianity was capable. Both contributed in some measure to free theology from the extreme narrowness and exclusiveness of sacerdotalism by enlarging its borders and making it the crowning point of an encyclopædic science that included all the intellectual activities of humanity. Thus the greatest of the Schoolmen, by fuller sympathies with the sum-total of human knowledge, were unconsciously preparing the way for the Renaissance. Indeed, no doctor of the Church was studied so fully or so appreciatively by the foremost leaders of the Renaissance as Thomas Aquinas.

But there is another outcome of this combination of philosophical methods with theological conclusions which is very distinctly impressed both on Albert the Great and on his more illustrious pupil. Neither of them were consistent thinkers. Their thought-systems are inconsequent and incongruous. Professedly dialecticians, their logic was the instrument of single disparate conclusions rather than the animating or cohesive principle of their method regarded as a whole. Hence we can hardly proceed a step in the investigation of either thinker without encountering discrepancies and antagonisms without end. Confining ourselves to Aquinas, we discover in him a perpetual and studied equilibration, a balancing of conflicting views and interests in every question he discusses. Nominalists and realists were then waging their wordy warfare: Aquinas takes part with neither. He sees the strong points of realism and adopts them. With equal readiness

[1] Comp. *e.g.* Aquinas's noble saying: 'Totius libertatis radix est in ratione constituta,' an expression often occurring in his works. Elsewhere, *e.g.* he says that the 'Will is the object of Liberty, but its cause is Reason.'

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he recognises what seems true in nominalism. He accepts finally a kind of conceptualism, as a mean between the two extremes. In the dichotomy between dialectic and theology or between Aristotle and the Church he professedly sides with neither, but adopts what seems truest in each. Though his general method is deductive, he frequently, as becomes an avowed Peripatetic, reasons inductively. A professed opponent of Arab thought, and especially of the system of Averroes, he does not scruple to adopt some of his teachings.[1] Though a defender of the Papacy, he denies that a Pope has power to frame new dogmas. While he admitted that the Church was superior to the civil power, he tries to place restrictions on ecclesiasticism, to prevent its injuring human liberty. In a word, his general attitude to all questions is that of a thoughtful but embarrassed mediator between contending doctrines and rival creeds. Nor is this his position only with regard to general questions or broad comprehensive aspects of truth; we shall find the same vacillation and uncertainty in the discussion of incidental and single questions, both of philosophy and theology.

Now the root-thought of these divergences—the cause of this perpetual oscillation—in a word, the keynote to Aquinas's intellect—is to be found in the fundamental dualism between faith and reason. Like so many other thoughtful Christians, Aquinas is by nature and mental idiosyncrasy a philosopher, and by education and circumstances a theologian. His first love is reason, even though he ultimately allies himself with faith. Aristotle commands his intellect though he permits his religious sentiment to be dominated by ecclesiastical dogma. As a consistent Peripatetic, he makes the starting-point of all knowledge to be the senses.[2] By means of the information they are adapted to supply, the reason or intellect is enabled to use its discriminative and judicial powers. This is the lowest stage of the reason, or that in which it apprehends purely physical facts. Soon, however, it rises above this elementary condition, and takes cognizance of mental processes as well. So far this faculty of the natural reason is common to the whole human race, and it is by its means that the heathen attained to that knowledge of God and Divine things which we find in many cases they acquired. But this natural reason is limited and imperfect.[3] The senses, *e.g.* are only able to perceive external qualities; they cannot comprehend the essence or substance of things, still less are they

[1] On Aquinas's obligations to Averroes, comp. E. Renan, *Averroïsme*, &c. pp. 231–36, who, however, seems inclined to overstate them.

[2] Comp. Jourdain, *Philosophie de Thomas d'Aquin*, i. pp. 200, 311.

[3] *Contra Gentiles*, lib. i. cap. iii., *Op. om.* vol. v. p. 3.

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able to attain to the knowledge of the Divine essence of God Himself. Nay more, even in their own sphere of phenomena they only supply partial information, for it is clear there are properties of phenomenal things which the senses cannot discern.[1] Furthermore their deliverances, regarded in the aggregate, are by no means uniform and unequivocal, for they differ in respect both of individuals and of species of intelligent beings. A rustic, for example, cannot comprehend the subtle ratiocinations of a philosopher; and Aquinas believes that there is a greater difference between the intellect of men and of angels than between that of the greatest philosopher and the most ignorant rustic. Here, therefore, we are on the ground of Skepticism. The ratiocination of the angel of the Schools reminds us of that of Pyrrhôn, but Aquinas is neither here nor elsewhere consistent with himself. For this natural reason, with all its shortcomings and uncertainties, is still a Divine gift, a faculty which man shares with the supreme wisdom. Indeed, within its own sphere, reason is reliable and autocratic, although in matters of faith it is impotent and uncertain. At this point, therefore, we reach the main source of Aquinas's dualism. We have to determine the relation of a natural faculty common to all mankind, to a special and supernatural communication of God to man. How far, it might be asked, are the procedures and tests of reason applicable to faith? The answer to this question may be given in his own words: 'Our theological beliefs offer a *double method* of truth. There are Divine truths which surpass the power of the human intellect, as for example the Trinity. There are others which the natural reason may reach, as God's existence, His Oneness, &c. which even philosophers, guided by natural reason, have demonstrated.[2] The practical effect of this dual relation is abundantly manifested in Aquinas's writings. It induces a subdivision of reason into two kinds, inferior and superior, the former being identified in its method and objects with natural reason, the latter becoming gradually merged in faith or religious intuition. You must not suppose that Aquinas states this dissidence in terms of avowed antagonism such as would bring it under the category of double-truth. Theoretically, faith is not contradictory but supplementary to reason, it does not contravene so much as surpass it. Taking up human wisdom and truth-discovery at the point where reason, in consequence of its weakness, is

[1] *Loc. cit.*: 'Rerum enim sensibilium plurimas proprietates ignoramus, earumque proprietatum quas sensu apprehendimus rationem perfecte in pluribus invenire non possumus.'

[2] *Contra Gentiles*, i. cap. iii.; comp. Jourdain, i. 158.

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compelled to leave them, it carries them forward into the region of the Unseen. Practically, however, faith is supreme. No methods of rational inquiry are held to be valid against the distinct utterance of Revelation. True, reason may, nay indeed ought to, examine, inquire, and prove, so far as it has ability, but it must not aspire to determine. The latter office is reserved for faith, whose pronouncements are therefore in every case reiterations or confirmations of foregone conclusions. Thus in the final stage of a process ostensibly founded on rational method reason ceases to exist except in its accustomed capacity of 'Ancilla Theologiæ,' and the conclusions of faith become in ultimate analysis arbitrary *fiats* of the will, in other words, categorical imperatives. Aquinas's real position is seen when he comes to examine such dogmas as the Trinity. Here reason is at once and peremptorily put out of court. The subject-matter is confessedly beyond its province. Its methods here are useless, and its authority ceases to exist. Proofs of the Trinity, according to Aquinas, are mischievous for two reasons: (1) they are derogatory to the dignity of the doctrine; (2) they are apt to turn men from religion by disclosing the weakness of its arguments. Conclusive reasons, he maintains, are not necessary for faith. To suppose them so would be to misconceive the sublimity of that Revelation which surpasses the understanding of men and of angels.[1]

But Aquinas's final stress on the claims of Revelation must not make us lose sight of the leaven of rationalism with which he contrives to combine it. No Schoolman reputedly orthodox lays so much stress on the natural reason as Aquinas. He continually insists on its importance to faith, for without reason faith, as its highest development, would become impossible. He asserts in terms the Divine origin which is the common property of every kind of reason; maintains it to be the sole principle of worthy human action. Nor is this all. We shall presently find that, in his own systematic discussions on the doctrines of the Church, reason occupies a much larger place in his treatment than does Revelation. He assigns to its methods, its tests, and its conclusions a scope and importance which have often in the history of human thought satisfied the demands even of Skeptical philosophers. In short, Aquinas represents the equipoising intellect in its perpetual effort to balance, without injury either to reason or faith, their mutual antagonisms. Too much of a theologian to allow reason to exclude faith, he is too much of a philosopher to permit faith to

[1] Comp. Jourdain, vol. i. p. 173.

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assert whatever it might choose on the subject of religion. Legitimately, the issue of such a dual position would be double-truth; but an open advocate of this doctrine Aquinas is not. On the contrary, he devotes a chapter of his 'Contra Gentiles' to its refutation.[1] Virtually, however, the only distinction between himself and an advocate of dual truth is that after his ratiocination, often in spite of it, he affirms the foregone conclusions of the Church.

I am inclined to think that this duality, together with the general many-sidedness of his method, may partly be accounted for by the intensity of his thought. His eagerness in seizing and rendering apprehensible the separate details of his argument seems to make him negligent of its effect as a whole. He appears comparatively indifferent to the remoter issues of his reasoning, or its general homogeneity. He expressly acknowledges that truth is manifold. He admits that it has a double relativity, one pertaining to the thinking subject, the other to the object thought. He discriminates between its different kinds with the candour of a mind more eager to comprehend its totality than to seize on one only of its phases, however important. Hence I cannot help thinking that in his divided allegiance to faith and reason the latter possesses, spite of appearances to the contrary, the greater share of his affection. He introduces reason whenever he possibly can. He treats with it all the dogmas of the Christian Church, even those generally held to be most mysterious and ineffable. No doctrine receives such a warm approval at his hands as that which has the suffrages of reason as well as of faith. No doubt faith is outwardly the superior as the faculty that partly includes, partly transcends reason, but Aquinas's faith, as I have noticed, is often no more than a determinate affirmation, neither asking nor desiring corroboration, and over an intellect like his a definitive assertion dispensing altogether with ratiocination could never have obtained exclusive domination.

I have dwelt on Aquinas's judicial relation to reason and faith at some length, because I consider it the general clue to his intellect, and therefore as illustrating his versatile mode of discussing all questions, theological no less than philosophical, ethical as well as exegetical. I will now glance at a few of his philosophical theories, in order to show their eclecticism, their equipoising methods, and consequent incertitude.

I. Let us take first the great question of the Middle Ages, which we shall have to examine more fully when we come to

[1] Lib. i. cap. vii.

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William of Ockam—I mean the controversy between realists and nominalists.

Aquinas, as we have observed, was on most points of philosophy, and on some few of theology, an Aristotelian. The commencement of knowledge he finds in the senses, and its after-growth he bases largely on experience and *à posteriori* reasoning. But the knowledge of the senses thus taken up into the intellect must needs be formulated and generalized by its processes, otherwise it cannot claim to be knowledge. In other words, the mind aspires on every subject to attain universal concepts. What then are universals? Are they independent entities existing apart both from the conceiving mind and the objects conceived? Are they pure products of the human intellect obtained by the exercise of its abstractive faculties? If the latter, are they innate and necessary, or only accidental? Aquinas discusses these different theories, and discards them. He prefers Aristotle's solution, viz. that universals exist in a twofold manner. First, they exist in the nature of many particular things. Secondly, they exist in an unified manner in the intellect, which has abstracted and collected them into a single concept. So far he is both a nominalist and conceptualist. But when he comes to consider the actual method employed by the mind in realizing universals, he is a realist as well, for he holds that the abstractions that constitute universals may be called images or likenesses of their objects, and thinks they may have a separate existence. He does not concede the doctrine of the Scotists, that sense-impressions are caused by the intermediate agency of their images, 'intelligible species' as they were termed, but he nevertheless asserts that they have an actual existence even prior to the creation of their correlated objects, *i.e.* in the minds of angels and supernatural beings, and he also allows that images and species may exist for men as modes of knowledge.[1]

It would be absurd to represent these divergent ideas as altogether consistent, or to claim them as connected portions of an uniform system. Prompted by diverse motives, they pursue different thought-directions, and arrive naturally at discordant results. The most enlightened of all Aquinas's philosophical defenders is obliged to admit their mutual dissidence.[2] But they serve to illustrate his extreme eclecticism. Indeed, a simple definite determination of a moot point in any given subject-matter it would be impossible to find in Aquinas. If there are no objections to be made, at least there are distinctions to be drawn, qualifications to

[1] Jourdain, *Op. cit.* i. p. 314. [2] Jourdain, *loc. cit.* comp. p. 322.

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be suggested, conditions to be asserted. M. Jourdain accounts for this phenomenon by the excessive refinement induced by a long training in dialectical subtleties.[1] But we must also ascribe it to the *Zeitgeist*. It was the ordinary method of Scholasticism, and Aquinas was only guilty of an extraordinary extension of it in virtue of his abnormal intellectual capacity and comprehensiveness. Thus on the question of realism *v.* nominalism there is hardly an opinion on the subject, whether propounded by advocates of those opposite schools or by conceptualists as occupying a medium position between them, which you may not find somewhere in his writings. Nor is there anything to prove either that he recognised the dissonance between his various dicta, or made any effort to diminish or destroy it. The causes of this extreme syncretism we have in part already noticed. It was chiefly the attempt to combine Aristotle with Christian dogma as it existed in the tenth century. At that time every philosophical problem was complicated by theological inferences and correlations. No matter how far removed from the principles and methods of theology a speculation may have been in the first instance, the all-embracing activities of a Church that claimed to be at once both omniscient and infallible were bound to bring it within her grasp. Hence Aquinas could not consider the points at issue between realist and nominalist without coming in contact with the theory of creation as contained in Scripture, any more than he could formulate a definition of individualism without including the speculations of the Church on the nature of angels and spirits. So far as his own idiosyncrasy as a philosopher was concerned, we may assume that his sympathies were in favour of some combination of nominalism and conceptualism, but the anthropomorphic conception of God adopted by the Church, together with the supposed intellectual qualities of angels, demanded some recognition of universals *ante rem*, *i.e.* prior to creation. Accordingly, as I have said, Aquinas is a realist, a conceptualist, and a nominalist, the first as a theologian, the last two as a philosopher and disciple of Aristotle.

There is another question closely akin to that just considered, with which the name of Aquinas has been especially connected, and which still further illustrates the character of his thought—I mean his theory of individuation. No small amount of speculation was expended in the schools, on the principle that differentiates the individual from the other members of his class, *i.e.* the species to which he belongs. Aristotle determined the question

[1] *Op. cit.* i. p. 261.

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by his well-known hypothesis of form and matter. The first was regarded as a kind of spiritual entity or a plastic energy which moulded and determined the latter, while Plato made an archetypal idea operating from without the cause of individuation. The distinction resembles in part that which is now current between teleologists and evolutionists. Aquinas decides the question on the side of Aristotle. Generally averse to the metaphysical generalizations of the realists, he was especially hostile to Averroes's theory of the indissoluble unity of the intellect with its Pantheistic implications. He therefore insisted that the true cause of individuation was matter, not, however, in the 'primary' form in which it was conceived by the Schoolmen, *i.e.* devoid of all qualities, but in its 'stamped' character (*materia signata*) as distinguished by the possession of definite properties. In his own words, it was a man's flesh, his bones as well as his vital principle or soul, that individuated him. But by his close adherence to Aristotelian materialism Aquinas involved himself in theological difficulties, for if matter were the sole cause of individual distinction, there could be no individuality in the case of pure spirits; but as Revelation assures us that such a distinction does exist, we are bound to infer that there are as many species as individuals among angelic beings. Indeed, he maintains that God Himself could not create two angels of the same species—a proposition which not only caused great scandal, but was formally condemned by the Archbishop of Paris, in 1276. A further difficulty arose from the application of his theory to human souls in their disembodied condition. He therefore has to modify his hypothesis in these different cases in order to make it harmonize with the opinions of theologians. This discussion is important for two reasons: (1) it illustrates the kind of 'hand-to-mouth' procedure so characteristic of eclecticism, by which Aquinas surmounts his difficulties, merely providing for them as they arise; (2) it manifests his intellectual independence in adopting a hypothesis considerably in advance of the theological thought of his time.

This leads me to notice another subject which, like those already considered, testifies both to Aquinas's speculative freedom and his Skeptical indifference to logical consistency. I have already observed that Averroes is the *bête noire* of St. Thomas. He terms him 'the destroyer of philosophy.' Now that which was especially obnoxious to Aquinas in the system of 'the great commentator' was the central idea of his teaching—the indivisibility of the intellect. This was at once an avowal of extreme Pantheism and a denial of the immortality of the human soul. We

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shall find, when we arrive at the Italian Renaissance and Pomponazzi, that this was the great problem that exercised the intellects of all the foremost thinkers in Europe from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, and Aquinas was one of the first among the powerful antagonists which Averroism stirred up. He, however, approaches the question from the side of Aristotelian materialism. The soul he defines as the efficient, formal, and final cause of its body. With Aristotle, he terms it the form of its body.[1] The knowledge which the soul possesses of itself he esteems imperfect, because it is only general and confused knowledge. To acquire particular and detailed knowledge the soul must obtain experience, and this is only possible through the instrumentality of the bodily senses. Hence the soul, in order to acquire a higher grade in the scale of intelligences, must be united to the body, and the main function of the latter is to complete what is wanting in the former. To a Cartesian or Platonic philosopher, as M. Hauréau rightly remarks,[2] such a theory would be 'energiquement sensualiste.' It was quite opposed to those Christian metaphysics which based the perfection and immortality of the soul on its pure spirituality. Indeed, Aquinas's zeal for the physical affinities of the soul is so great as to betray him sometimes into expressions of complete materialism. Thus he terms the soul 'an act of the bodily organization,'[3] calls its attributes 'energies of the organs of the body,' and states that 'it is educed by the power of matter itself.' It would be clearly wrong to push these isolated phrases to their legitimate issue, both because they are distinctly contravened by others of opposite implication, and because they express occasional and momentary phases of thought in a many-sided speculation; but they are useful as proving the latitudinarian character of his thought—the point on which I chiefly wish to insist.

Tending in the same direction of eclecticism and equipoise we have his doctrine of diversity of souls.[4] Already we have noticed his unwillingness to grant as a possibility the existence of two

[1] See, on the various mediæval theories relating to this subject, Dr. M. Schneid's *Körperlehre des Johannes Duns Scotus und ihr Verhältniss zum Thomismus und Atomismus.*

[2] *Histoire*, &c. vol. ii. pt. i. p. 380.

[3] This definition is derived from Aristotle, and was generally accepted by mediæval Peripatetics. Pomponazzi calls it 'the common definition of the soul,' and points out that its purport is to deny the doctrine of immortality. See his *De Immortalitate Animæ*, p. 13.

[4] Comp. *Summa Theol.* i. dist. lxxvi. 2 (Migne's ed. vol. i. p. 1216); Jourdain, i. p. 285, &c.

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spirits of the same species. This was in the case of angels. But a similar hesitation would be still more justified as to human souls, especially after investiture with corporeal organs, and with a distinct experience on the part of each individual. Thus his diversity of knowledge and of knowledge-methods fits in with his idea of the endless disparity of intelligences, and would result, if carried to its legitimate outcome, in a relativity which might be described as 'Quot intelligentiæ tot sententiæ.' Without actually insisting on it, Aquinas undoubtedly inclines to that belief. He affirms in express terms the variability of subjective knowledge, just as he does the mutability of all subjective truth. 'Certitude,' he says, 'is found in different natures in diverse manners according to the different condition of each nature.' Indeed, the relativity of knowledge is more than once admitted by him, though, as in other instances, the doctrine is in entire contradiction to some of his remaining tenets.

II. Passing now to Aquinas's theology. Here, without previous acquaintance with his thought, we might have anticipated a somewhat different method. As a philosopher and Aristotelian, Aquinas had a perfect right to his free standpoint, his juxtaposition of rival authorities, his selection of them from all quarters indifferently, the calm equilibration of their arguments. Both in theory and actual origin, philosophy was pledged to no dogma or foregone conclusion, and theoretically the field was left open to any inference based on legitimate grounds. But in theology the case was different. Here Aquinas stood face to face with an elaborated scheme of dogma, to which he professed *ex animo* to adhere. His position was not that of Abelard, who, after exhausting philosophy, turned his attention to theology in order to ascertain how much demonstrable truth it contained. Aquinas accepted the dogmatic conclusions of the Church without any such preparatory scrutiny. If he was unable to establish them by reason, he could coerce his will to their reception. If there were no inherent compulsion, he could institute an arbitrary one, whose effect would practically be the same. But when we examine Aquinas's theology we find not the least distinction in method. He evinces the same dual tendency that we have noticed in his philosophy, the same readiness to subdivide distinctions already impalpable, the same balancing of arguments, *sic aut non*, as the case might be, the same habit of quoting indifferently from sacred and profane sources—Aristotle's utterances being put, *e.g.* on the level of Augustine's, or even Christ's. Nor can we discern any abatement of the magnanimous candour with which he states the views of opponents.

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Striking examples of this ingenuousness may be found in any of Aquinas's controversial writings. Let us take, by way of illustration, his investigation of miracles contained in the 'Disputed Questions.'[1] Here we have no less than twenty-one reasons of more or less cogency against the possibility of miracles. Of these it might be said without fear of contradiction that had they been formulated by a determined adversary of the supernatural, they could hardly have been stated more forcibly. They include most of the arguments on that side of the subject that were known before the time of Hume. He inquires 'whether God can effect anything in creation against natural causes, or contrary to the course of nature;' and first it seems not, for

1, 2. God, as the creator of all natural things, can do nothing against nature. God can no more act against the laws of nature than against Himself.

3. The order of nature is derived from Divine wisdom, just as human justice owes its origin to Divine justice; but God cannot act against human justice and thereby cause crime, so neither can He act against the order of nature.

5. God cannot cause two mutual contradictories to be true. Hence He cannot effect what, *ex hypothesi*, are impossibilities in nature.

6. God cannot act by mutable volition against causes that He Himself voluntarily instituted.

7. Order is the good of the universe, but God cannot act against the advantage of His own creation.

10. According to Aristotle, nature is the cause of order in all things, but that God cannot do anything except in conformity with this order is asserted in Rom. xiii. 1, 'The powers that be are ordained of God.' Therefore He cannot do anything against nature.

11. The human reason is from God, so also is nature. God cannot act against the former, so neither can He against the latter.

12. The artificer cannot, unless by error, do anything contrary to his craft. Hence God, the artificer of the universe, cannot act against the course of nature.

13. All action presupposes a tendency to act, but we cannot ascribe to God a disposition to act against nature.

14. Anselm affirmed that the least inconvenience is impossible to God, and a change in the order of nature would be inconvenient. Therefore, &c.

15. Power is related to the impossible as knowledge is to false-

[1] *De Potentia*, qu. vi. *Op. om.* viii. p. 122.

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hood, but God cannot know what is false in nature. Therefore He has no power to effect the impossible.

19. This urges the inconvenience which would result if God produced effects of nature without the intervention of natural causes.

20. Cause in relation to effect possesses an essential order of succession, but God cannot destroy the effect while the cause remains, and hence He cannot produce a natural effect without a natural cause.

21. It is unbecoming that the greater good should give way to the lesser; but the good of the whole universe is better than the advantage of one particular part. Therefore God cannot change for the behoof of one man or a single nation laws which He instituted for the good of the universe as a whole.

These twenty-one *cons* are of course duly followed by their correlated *pros*, which, however, do not seem to us quite so forcibly put; but what is important for us to notice is Aquinas's frankness in the discussion of questions of theology. The exceeding exuberance of this candour,[1] so often observable in his writings, can only be accounted for by an unlimited confidence in reason, and in its power to apprehend and verify truth. It would be interesting to ascertain, were it possible, the precise effect of this mode of ratiocination on those who were continually dieted on it. What intellectual momentum, *e.g.* and of what kind, would a thinker of the thirteenth century derive from a series of twenty *pros* set in array against twenty-one *cons*? In the present day, with our more direct methods of reasoning, the attempt to revive such an exact equilibration of conflicting arguments would be too formal to be successful. But if it could be adopted, the result would often be pure suspense. In ancient Greece, as we know, this was regarded as the inevitable outcome of the method—itself one of the most valued weapons in the armoury of Pyrrhonism. But in mediæval times and in general relation to Christian dogma this was by no means necessarily the case. Thinkers reared in the principles of ecclesiasticism, and holding that no ratiocination could by any possibility invalidate the dicta of the Church, were always

[1] Aquinas's excessive ingenuousness in stating objections to Church dogmas has often been the subject of angry comment on the part of his coreligionists. Cæsar Cantù, *e.g.* in his *Eretici d'Italia* (vol. i. p. 97), thus describes his method: 'Enuncia, per lo più in forma di quistione, il teorema che intende dimostrare; poi espone e sillogizza tutte le opposizioni filosofiche con tal franchezza e lealtà, che poterono da lui attingere eresie ed objezioni quanti ebbero la mala fede di sopprimere le risposte.'

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provided with a remedy for the suspense which might arise from the equal balance of antithetical arguments. They had only to affirm, as Aquinas did, the arbitrary determination of the will, and the matter was settled.

We will next consider Aquinas's treatment of the first article in the creed—belief in God. This again we shall find to be strikingly illustrative both of his Free-thought and of his inconsequent ratiocination.

All we really know of God, according to Aquinas, is His existence. We know that God *is*. But this truth is not to be accepted as an authoritative dogma propounded by theology, and incapable of demonstration, nor is it to be received as an intuition based on ontological and *à priori* grounds; nor again are men to create an imaginary Deity by making Him the embodiment of all the positive attributes we choose to assign to Him. The being of God is capable, he thinks, of demonstration, and demonstration *à posteriori*. He accordingly adopts Aristotle's mode of proving God's existence by inferring a mover from the fact of motion. This is only another form of the general argument from causation which we shall find was impugned by Ockam, but which Aquinas regarded as indubitable. Every effect must have its adequate and appropriate cause, and that there cannot be an infinite regress in the series of causes, but we must postulate a primary cause, is admitted by Aristotle himself. But these effects and multiform movements are seen to exist in the universe. The visible world is therefore to Aquinas the most obvious and indisputable of all the proofs of God's existence.[1] Even its dissonances and contradictions tend to demonstrate the being of a Supreme Ruler; for what other cause could be alleged for the order that seems evolved from so much disorder and discrepancy? But having thus determined from the combined action of the reason and the teachings of the universe that God exists, Aquinas hesitates to go further except by the road of negation (*viâ remotionis*). Though we know that God is, we cannot tell what He is. In Scholastic terminology we cannot define the Divine substance: we know only what He is not. Here Aquinas is in accord with Abelard, Ockam, and many other mediæval thinkers who derived their inspiration from the so-called Dionysius the Areopagite, the author of this proof by negation. But the process itself, as you will see, is the usual method by which the Realists attained to their highest abstractions, *i.e.* by eliminating all qualities and determinations until nothing was left but pure

[1] *Contra Gentiles*, i. xiii., *Op. om.* v. p. 12.

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Ens, or unconditioned being. That this process is both inconsistent with the reasoning that infers a Creator from the visible universe, and is besides of a peculiarly dangerous character for a dogmatic theologian, I need not point out.[1] But inconsistencies are of small account in Aquinas's estimation. So, pursuing his negative path, he demonstrates that God cannot have either beginning or ending, that He is not material, that He has not body, nor anything of a composite character, that He does not contain anything accidental, that He has not a purely passive capacity, that He cannot be defined by any other genus but His own, &c. M. Jourdain has observed that Aquinas was induced to propound his definitions of Deity by the Pantheism then prevalent of David de Dinant and Amaury; but however great his antagonism to those thinkers, his own writings are not altogether free from occasional sentiments and reasonings which have a distinct flavour of Pantheism. In truth, Aquinas's intellect was too comprehensive, his sense of the infinitude of Deity, the illimitable nature of His powers and attributes, was too profound to allow him to ignore those aspects of truth of which in any case Pantheism is only an exaggerated statement. But although Aquinas, in deference to the authority of the pseudo-Areopagite, and partly as a counteractive to Pantheistic dogma, sanctioned a negative conception of Deity, he declined carrying it to its legitimate issue. When he comes to discuss the Divine relation to humanity through the agency of nature or Revelation, his conceptions of God and His attributes are just as positive as those of any theologian. Not unfrequently indeed his expositions of the Divine dealings have a distinct flavour of anthropomorphism. More in accord with his negative standpoint is his opinion that all our knowledge of God attainable by human faculties or by ordinary methods is imperfect. To know God in His essence, a supernatural state of beatific vision, a kind of superior reason or intuition, is necessary. Hence he agrees with Abelard, Ockam, and for that matter with most Christian theologians, in anticipating in the future world that plenitude of knowledge unattainable in this. It would be difficult to determine from his own diversiform utterances the precise connection he supposed to exist between this supernatural reason and the ordinary reason shared by all men alike. But taking as our guides tendencies rather than *obiter dicta*, we shall not be far wrong in saying that while as a philosopher his inclination was to make their difference one of degree, as a theologian he actually

[1] See, on this point, Jourdain, i. p. 206.

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regarded them as distinct in kind—another form, in short, of the ultimate dichotomy of reason and faith.

There is little that is markedly peculiar in Aquinas's doctrine of Providence, if we except his constant effort to combine Aristotle's teaching with the dogmas of the Church. He makes God's knowledge extend far beyond the limits of actuality, even as conceived in the Divine mind. God knows not only what is, but what is not and might have been. On this ground he declines to believe with Abelard that our universe is the best of all possible worlds.[1] With his accustomed appreciation of freedom, he refuses to tie down omniscience to the little our finite intelligences are able to discern concerning His action. God, he thinks, might have conceived other designs besides that which He actually chose; but having for good reasons, known only to Himself, selected that which the universe presents to us, its development is perfect. It is needless to point out the inconsequences of this ratiocination, or to show how it purchases the unlimited freedom of the supreme volition at the cost of the absolute wisdom of its actual operations. As bearing on his eclecticism, we may observe that Aquinas finds the multifarious diversity of the creation in harmony with the collective attributes of God, the numberless beings, species, varieties, &c. being necessary as a complete many-sided reflection of the supreme power, wisdom, and goodness.[2] A more interesting peculiarity of Aquinas's doctrine of the providential government of the world is the traces it exhibits of something like a theory of evolution. Of the act of creation he maintains that it is indemonstrable—an object of faith, not of knowledge; but creation once posited as an accomplished fact, he is inclined to make its continuity and preservation the outcome of unchangeable laws. Indeed, he goes further, and asserts that the process of conservation is only the perpetuation of the self-same energy that first brought the universe into being.[3] This phrase may remind you of the stress he allowed to be placed on the uniformity of the course of nature, as distinguished from miraculous interferences. In this connection, too, I may add that though he regards miracles as necessary and befitting the promulgation of Christianity, he does not consider them abso-

[1] *De Potentia*, qu. i. 5.; comp. Jourdain, i. 257, who points out Abelard's agreement with Malebranche and Leibnitz on this point. See also Ritter, *Gesch.* viii. p. 281.

[2] Jourdain, i. p. 231.

[3] *Summa Theol.* i. qu. xiv. art. i.: 'Conservatio rerum a Deo non est per aliquam novam actionem; sed per continuationem actionis qua dat esse.' See Jourdain, i. p. 241.

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lutely so, for Christ might have chosen to convert men by an appeal to their instincts and reason, in other words, by purely moral influences.[1]

There is one more aspect of Aquinas's theology—also illustrating his evolutionary tendencies—which we must glance at before leaving this cursory sketch, viz. the relation of Christianity to the precedent condition of the world. His own partiality for Greek and other non-Christian literature would of itself suggest an assimilation between Gentile and Christian truth; and this he is inclined to manifest so far as the exigencies of dogma will allow. He shares the belief we have already noticed, of the Alexandrian school and St. Paul, of a prior and natural Revelation imprinted by God in the hearts of all men. Thereby men have acquired those primitive instincts of justice and goodness which have enabled them to establish political and social systems. Hence they have come by that gift of reason which has guided them into such important acquisitions of truth. Through its agency we possess all that varied and massive wisdom of ancient Greece—the metaphysical speculations of Plato, and the still more valuable natural science of Aristotle. But this primary and universal Revelation was imperfect for more than one reason, but chiefly because it did not guide humanity direct to God—the alone source of all truth, wisdom, and goodness. Accordingly the Christian Revelation was added, not to contravene the utterances of the former, but to confirm, enhance, extend them, as well as to impart to them a new direction. The gospel is, therefore, the crown and glory of the natural Revelation given to all men. They also stand to each other in the relation of explicit and implicit faith; the first making clear and manifest what the second contained in a veiled, partial, or imperfect form. Aquinas's opinion on the salvability of the heathen we shall have another opportunity of discussing.[2] I will only say here that it partakes of that perpetual conflict between his own natural instinct, his sense of justice and humanity, on the one hand, and the dicta of the Church on the other, which is so general a feature of his thought.

Having thus glanced at the eclectic spirit in which St. Thomas

[1] *Quodlibeta*, ii. 6 (*Op. om.* ix. p. 477); comp. his *Commentary on St. John*, cap. xv. lect. v. (*Op. om.* x. p. 572). In an age when belief was based so exclusively upon miracles, it is important to notice Aquinas's attempts to modify this misconception. He points out, *e.g.* how miracles diminished the merit of faith, and that the disciples of Christ believed on Him before they saw His miracles.

[2] See *Essay on La-Mothe-le-Vayer*, in a succeeding volume.

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discusses some of the primary doctrines of the Christian faith, I need go no further in this direction. On all other dogmas on which the mind of the Church had been long and decisively affirmed, his standpoint is the same—a careful marshalling of opposite arguments, sometimes followed by a judicial summing up of their different bearings; but ending with, in most cases, a preponderance on the side of dogma. But the chief characteristic of his intellect is the equilibration, not the preponderance. The latter is a duty; the former, clearly a mental pleasure. His intellectual pendulum is perpetually oscillating between the demands of reason, of justice, of expediency, of humanity, and the pronouncements of dogma. Even when the doctrines of the Church are too sacred and ineffable to be analysed, too mysterious to be rationally discussed, he yet contrives to examine them indirectly, and to suggest analogies, &c. as reasons for their acceptance. Thus, although he declares that the Trinity must be received without investigation, he himself enters upon an explanation of each of its parts.[1] The Incarnation he defines as the greatest of all miracles, yet he is eager to find analogies and reasoned justifications of it. While accepting, and on some points exaggerating, the efficacy of the Atonement, he yet refuses to allow that it was absolutely necessary.[2] In regard to doctrines of lesser importance he similarly steers a zigzag course between rival theories. He recognises what seems most true in predestination, and what must be maintained on behalf of human liberty. Man's will, he admits, is free, but its *ultima ratio* is the Divine volition. Evil is only privative, but nevertheless its positive conditions as determined by the Church, its army of demons with their supernatural powers, its physical tortures of hell-fire, are rigidly insisted on.[3] His views of heresy, of political rights and duties, and other questions in which authority and liberty come into conflict, are alike equilibrations between the claims of the antagonistic principles, with, as I have already remarked, a final bias towards authority, especially as represented by the Church.

III. Proceeding next to his ethical teaching, we find the same method of equipoise, but with the distinction that it is fully

[1] See Ritter, *Gesch. der Phil.* viii. p. 276. Baur's *Dreieinigkeit*, ii. 684.

[2] Qu. xlvi. art. 1. Comp. on this subject, Baur's *Lehre v. der Versöhnung*, p. 247.

[3] It is one of the countless inconsistencies of Aquinas, that though he maintains fully the physical nature of eternal torments, he yet thinks that the never-dying 'worm' is not material, but spiritual, and represents the remorse of conscience.

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avowed. The basis of his morality is indeed more Aristotelian than ecclesiastical, and for this very reason forms a pleasing contrast to the ritual morality most affected by the Church. He starts with the fundamental maxim of the Nichomachean ethics, that man must needs pursue what he esteems the supreme good. This in Aquinas's ultimate ratiocination is nothing else but God: mediately, however, it may be defined as intellectual, or more frequently—for Aquinas's sentiments on this, as on every topic, are variously expressed—ethical excellence. To enable man to attain to this *summum bonum* we must admit that his will is free.[1] Indeed Aquinas, like Malebranche and Condillac, makes the will identical with the appetite, for with all his love of subdividing and distinguishing he occasionally evinces an appreciation of simplification. Now the value of any human action is determined by three things—its object, circumstances, and intention. An action must be unexceptionable in each of these respects before it can be truly described as good. But it is evident that in this very enunciation of the conditions of moral worth a large field of speculation and uncertainty is thrown open. Aquinas therefore insists that virtue is a mean between two extremes, and this mean is determinable by reason. To use his own words, 'The good of moral virtue consists in its conformity to the standard of reason.'[2] It is clear, however, that between excess and defect there is a mean of equality or agreement, whence it evidently appears that moral virtue consists in a mean.[3] Almost the *ipsissima verba*, we may add, of Aristotle in his ethics. But even this definition does not make equilibration needless; on the other hand, it demands its application in every particular instance. The very terms of the definition assume a certain degree of mutability. Moreover, the mean itself is not always represented by a point equidistant from its supposed extremes, for, as Aristotle himself admitted, it sometimes approximates to one, sometimes to the other. I need not point out the similarity of this method with that which had become the normal procedure of all ecclesiastical inquiry. Substitute for separate arguments a divergency of ethical conditions and circumstances, and the after-processes of balancing and deciding are in the two cases alike. Aquinas insists so much on this method that the

[1] On this point M. Hauréau considers Aquinas's opinions so pronounced as to savour of Pelagianism; see his art. ('St. Thomas') in *Dictionnaire des Sci. Philosophiques.*

[2] 'Bonum enim virtutis moralis consistit in adæquatione ad mensuram rationis.' Comp. following reference.

[3] Jourdain, i. p. 355.

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moral doctrine of the 'Summa' has been termed a commentary on Aristotle's ethics.[1] Every thinker must allow that there were features of this teaching of peculiar importance to Christianity, especially at the time when it received the high sanction of the 'angel of the Schools.' To begin with, the ethics of Aristotle is in itself a nearer approximation to the moral teaching of Christ than the spurious ethics which the Church had for her own interest too often sanctioned. Aristotle at least would never have allowed a speculative opinion on an unimportant subject to be substituted for gross neglect of elementary human duties. It was something also to have the moral conduct for which each man is individually responsible thrown upon the broad bases of reason and humanity, instead of being dictated *ab extra* by sacerdotalism. Nor was the exercise of independent judgment in estimating the conflicting movements in a given course of action, and finally determining on the issue to be preferred, without its advantages at a period when so little scope was allowed for the employment of such judicial functions. At the same time we must take heed not to exaggerate this Aristotelian aspect of Aquinas's moral teaching. It would involve a fundamental misconception of his character to suppose that his philosophical predilections were on any topic so pronounced as to make him unmindful of his orthodoxy. Hence we have in his moral doctrine the same duality that we have already noticed in his intellectual speculation. For as there are two kinds of reason, the first natural and inferior, the second supernatural and Divine, so is there a natural and infused virtue. The latter, being supernatural in origin and efficacy, is superior to the former. Here again we come to the dichotomy of faith and reason that underlies all his theorizing. Aquinas's own conception of the precise relation of the superior and inferior virtue is not easy to determine, for his opinions on this subject are no more consistent than they are on others. He sometimes appears inclined to make the higher morality distinct from the lower, not in degree only, but in kind. He asserts, for instance, that the theological virtues differ in species from all the moral and intellectual virtues—an utterance, surely, of sacerdotal intolerance, for it would imply that no man had ever exercised the virtues of faith, hope, and charity before the introduction of those graces by Christ. More in harmony with his Catholic moods is his opinion that all virtue, as all reason, is in its origin Divine, and therefore that all manifestations of it at whatever time must needs have some sacredness

[1] Jourdain, i. p. 358.

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pertaining to them. But, as I have so often said, we must not hope for consistent thought in Aquinas. Here, as elsewhere, he is an eclectic, putting forth what appears most true or striking in conflicting schemes of thought, without the least regard for their mutual congruity. Hence we meet with continual dissonances, the inevitable result of his standpoint between philosophy and ecclesiasticism. As a philosopher, *e.g.* he believes and asserts that man always desires good as his supreme object; but as a theologian, and in view of the doctrine of the Fall, he is compelled to contradict his assertions on that matter.

I will not weary you with the countless distinctions which Aquinas introduces into his ethical teaching, nor is it necessary. What I have already said will show you the nature of his speculations, as well as of their diverse character. The objection has often been made that by means of its manifold distinctions, subtle refinements, &c. Aquinas's moral teaching prepared the way for the complete ethical Skepticism of the Jesuits. It would be truer to say that both one and the other are in kind developments of the same primordial causes. These are—1st. The claim on the part of the Church to decide all controverted issues in morals, as in every other department of human knowledge. 2nd. The introduction of dialectic, often of a captious kind, into ethics and theology. Aquinas's moral distinctions and subdivisions were no novelty. All the principles and procedures of mediæval thought revealed the same features, and in method casuistry is synonymous with scholasticism. But there is but little trace in Aquinas of that scandalous perversion of all ethical principles which has rendered Jesuitism a word of infamy. It is true his teaching here, as always, is ultimately made to accord with the dicta of the Church; but his conception both of the Church and her genuine interests differs widely from that which the followers of Loyola thought proper to adopt.

IV. I have often characterized Aquinas's teachings as inconsistent: the same charge cannot be made against his method. That is always the same. He is always an eclectic. Indeed, his incongruities are only outgrowths of that rudimentary principle. We have already seen the truth of this remark in his philosophy, his theology, and his ethical teaching; but it also holds good of him as a commentator. His exegesis is as uncertain as his speculation. Almost half of his voluminous writings consist of expositions, and they are all pervaded by the same spirit of syncretism and cosmopolitan sympathies. Thus in his Scriptural comments we can never affirm that we have a decisive opinion as to any

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particular passage, until we are certain that he has never contradicted it elsewhere, and to assert this deliberately presupposes a detailed knowledge of the contents of some twenty-five massive folios. Thus we have not only divergent but contradictory opinions as to whether Abraham did right, from an ethical standpoint, when he attempted to sacrifice his son; whether he was culpable or not in proclaiming Sarah to be his sister; whether Jacob really conversed with God face to face; whether the prophet Hosea was right in contracting the singular marriage to which he confesses in the first chapter of his prophecy,[1] &c. Nor was this freedom of Scriptural exposition part of that general latitude which the Fathers derived from the allegorical interpretation of the Bible. It was rather a diversity of view suggested by the different moods of the writer, or induced by the various standpoints and connections that presented themselves in his many works. The same remarks also apply to Aquinas's comments on Aristotle. True, he does not string together, as in the 'Catena Aurea,' the different interpretations of the text propounded by various authorities, probably for the reason that, with the exception of Boethius, the commentators on the Stagirite were unknown to him; but he readily excogitates different possible renderings from the large resources of his own intellect, and leaves the reader with an embarrassment of exegetical riches to select the rendering that appears to him best.

We are now, I think, in a position to take a fair and comprehensive view of Aquinas's intellectual standpoint, and we must make ample allowance for the peculiar nature of his environment. He found himself surrounded by a multitudinous and diversiform speculation of varied origin, scope, and tendency: the utterances of Holy Scripture conveyed and explained by numerous commentators diverse in knowledge and sympathies; the teachings of the Church attested by decrees of councils and the writings of the Fathers, and displaying beneath a fictitious semblance of unity a multiform diversity of speculation; the philosophies of Aristotle and other Greek thinkers with a similarly divergent presentation, though of narrower extent; the more recent speculation of Arabic thinkers, with their strong leaning to Pantheistic metaphysics, and their independent investigation of nature. As a many-sided thinker, capable of entering sympathetically into conflicting ideas and schemes of thought, Aquinas was not so much embarrassed as

[1] Those who care to pursue the subject of Aquinas's contradictory interpretations, Biblical or otherwise, may be referred to the 5th Index 'De Antilogiis,' in vol. i. of Migne's edition of the *Summa*, or the Index of De Bergamo, contained in vol. xxv. of the *Opera omnia*, ed. Parmæ.

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a man of narrower culture would have been, either by the multiplicity or mutual antagonism of these many schemes. He carefully revolved in his own mind their foundations, their developments, and their several outcomes. All claiming alike to be based on reason, he was compelled to give them due consideration. Indeed, apart from their claims, his own predilection for thought of any kind was so great that any thinkable scheme was certain to command his respect and insure his investigation. It was impossible, *e.g.* to say what was dialectically justifiable in the system of Averroes, or what was not, until he had attentively considered it. Although he rejects it as a whole, he borrows some few of its reasonings and conclusions. He deals in the same way with all the other thought-methods that presented themselves for his examination. Ultimately he chooses from each those principles or conclusions most in harmony with his own predilections. He was not frightened at the inconsistency of the *tout ensemble*, even if he cared to contemplate it. Heterogeneousness in thought was no bugbear to him. Besides being the outcome of his own conviction that all intelligences were disparate and individual, he saw too many traces of it, or a multifariousness undistinguishable from it, in nature, in philosophy, nay, in theology itself, to be alarmed at it, or to regard it as abnormal. There is an old Devonshire proverb which says, 'It takes all sorts to make a world.' Aquinas would perhaps have said, 'It takes all sorts to erect a scheme of Catholic thought,' especially one that would include philosophy as well as theology. Indeed, his own definition of theology is so framed as to comprehend not only philosophy but every department of human inquiry.[1] Accordingly he brings together his materials, and erects the most elaborate, but withal the most 'ruda indigestaque moles' that is known in the history of human speculation. His 'Summa,' as the most systematic of all his works, has been compared to a Gothic cathedral. Some time ago I tried to realize the appropriateness of the simile while engaged in contemplating our cathedral at Salisbury, but I failed. In truth, the simile is too flattering. The 'Summa,' though not deficient in amplitude and multitudinous detail, as a whole lacks uniformity. It is more like Solomon's temple for its vastness, and because its materials are collected from all quarters. But the church that might fitly challenge comparison with it would be one not only built of many kinds of materials, but one that should embody different styles of architecture, and be adapted for various modes of worship—a combination of Christian cathedral, Greek temple, and Mahometan mosque.

[1] *Contra Gentiles*, lib. i. cap. iv.

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Nor are we left to infer Aquinas's cosmopolitan sympathies and his predilection for multifariousness indirectly from his diversified treatment of different topics. We have his own repeated admission of his idiosyncrasy. Indeed, his polemic against the Pantheism of Averroes and some Christian thinkers of his time necessitated an individualizing, disintegrating policy of thought. When the heresy consisted in fusing the whole of existence, physical and spiritual, into an undistinguishable oneness, it was clearly the duty of orthodoxy to insist on the differentiation and consequent variety of the constituent parts. Thus Aquinas defined God as the primal cause in which all effects are contained. The multiplicity of nature he considered necessary in order to reflect the manifold attributes of Deity.[1] Of the sum of intelligences, human and Divine, he thought no two were precisely alike. He regarded human language as involving an infinite diversity of implication. He recognised the manifold senses of Scripture, refusing, however, to admit that they were self-contradictory. Aristotle's method he especially eulogized for amassing exhaustively all possible opinions on a given subject before declaring his own decision. He described dialectic as uniform only in speculative things, but of different kinds in demonstrative science. Just as he defined Deity as the cause of manifold effects, so he pronounced the human soul as being in its multiple operations 'all things.' Truth itself he asserts to be multiform, and that in a twofold manner: (1) by the diversity of things known; (2) by means of different methods of knowing. Taken as indications of mental disposition, and coupled with what we know of his own method, the aggregate force of these different definitions and opinions seems to me considerable. They attest an omnivorous appetite for multiform and many-sided aspects of truth, and, what is more, an inclination to regard every truth not as single and uniform but as multiple and diverse.

To attempt to formulate in some consistent shape or to present in epitome the belief of such a myriad-minded thinker as Aquinas is upon the face of it a sheer absurdity. One might just as reasonably exhibit an herbarium or a collection of fossils as an epitome of the universe. Not only might each intellectual tendency be countermatched by another divergent form if not contrary to it, but to almost every expression of opinion it might be possible to oppose others of varying degrees of dissimilarity. While looking through his works, I collected not a few indications of his Freethought sympathies, but I found them so often contradicted or

[1] Jourdain, i. p. 284.

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modified by other passages that I did not think it fair to urge them. Still, I have not the least doubt in my own mind that he was more of a philosopher and a rationalist than a dogmatic theologian—a conclusion, I may add, to which many even of his co-religionists have arrived. Passing over minor arguments in favour of this view, there seem to me to be two especially deserving consideration: 1st. His extreme individualism. Although he asserted it as the antithesis to Averroes' theory of the indissolubility of the intellect, it is manifest that he carried it to a Skeptical extent. Among the Schoolmen no thinker asserted so firmly the maxim of Protagoras, that man—the individual, not the species—is the measure of all things. The outcome of this argument we have more than once indicated. Nothing indeed can well be more evident than that the predication of individual distinctness in the case of all intelligences, earthly or heavenly, renders truth as a common possession impossible and absurd. Aquinas's chief difference on this matter from Sextos Empeirikos is, that as a theologian he extends to celestial intelligences the disparity which the philosopher limits to human intellects. 2ndly. I cannot help thinking that for doubt in the sense of suspense Aquinas entertained no small measure of active sympathy. Indeed, it is difficult to see how he could have forborne to do so. The principle of intellectual hesitancy is so closely allied to his own chosen method of equilibration that he could hardly have impugned the former without condemning the latter. He defines doubt as 'a movement of the reason on both sides of a subject, combined with a dread of determining either, lest one might be involved in a wrong conclusion.' He acknowledges that it is 'a mode of avoiding errors,'[1] for 'in all problematical matters there should not be a facile assent.' His appreciation of doubt seems indicated by various other circumstances. Thus all his heresies are dogmatic, either positively or negatively. The very term heresy implies, as he justly remarks, determinate dogma; his construction of non-Christian beliefs, for an ecclesiastic of the thirteenth century, is singularly tolerant. He makes the implicit faith of Jews and Gentiles prior to the Christian era an equivalent for the explicit belief required afterwards. Blameworthy heresy, he says, consists in pertinacity, and is engendered by pride and worldly interest. He admits that misbelievers, when they do not try to corrupt others, should be tolerated, and maintains that the uninstructed can in no case be deemed heretics. To this we must add the charitable

[1] Comp. on this point, lib. i. cap. iv. of the *Contra Gentiles*.

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tone of his controversial works, especially of his 'Contra Gentiles.' But more than all is the curious fact that he nowhere blames or tries to refute Skepticism as such. M. Jourdain has remarked on this singularity, which seems the more noteworthy because Henry de Gand, the most illustrious Schoolman among the contemporaries of Aquinas, has dedicated a considerable part of the Introduction of his 'Summa' to the subject.[1] This writer describes Skeptics as men 'who by affirming that everything is uncertain have engendered in many minds despair of finding truth.'[2] Was Henry de Gand, asks M. Jourdain, gifted with a forecast of the Renaissance, or was Skepticism, in the sense of suspense, already in existence? I am inclined to favour the latter hypothesis. That Skepticism was even then widely disseminated in the south of Europe seems to me clear for reasons which we shall have another opportunity of examining;[3] and my own solution of Aquinas's silence is, not that he had any sympathy with suspense for its own sake, but as a mode of cautious investigation it was too closely akin to his own method of equipoise to justify its reprehension.

But if Aquinas was not, as Bishop Huet called him, a Pyrrhonist, it may still be asked how far he shared in that semi-Skeptical mode of thought which we have denominated double-truth. And here we must discriminate. We noticed under Sokrates and in the chapter on Twofold Truth the idiosyncrasy of many thinkers to antithetical reasoning, and the reception of contradictory conclusions. In the case of Sokrates the standpoint is ironical and purely Skeptical. The judge gravely mediating between the contending parties professes the most absolute ignorance as to the merits of the question, and allows the issue, generally uncertain, to be self-evolved in the process of discussion. But with the advocates of double-truth and with Pyrrhonists, the antagonism between opposing beliefs is clear, definite, and avowed: the judge is constrained to admit the opposite issues to be equally true and irreconcilable. Now the judicial Skepticism of Aquinas is somewhat different from both of these. In this case it is assumed as a necessary postulate that one of the contradistinctions is infallibly true, but together with that assumption it is admitted that the opposite may have much to say for itself, so much indeed as almost to elevate it into the category of certitude, but

[1] Jourdain, vol. ii. pp. 30, 31.

[2] Comp. *Recherches Historiques et Critiques sur Henri de Gand*, par F. Huet, p. 117.

[3] See the chapters on the *Italian Renaissance and Pomponazzi*, in the next volume.

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always leaving a residuum of advantage to the favoured side. Hence, if Sokrates's ironic Skepticism may be represented by balances in a perpetual state of mobility, with no special inclination to one side more than the other, and if the method of double-truth and Pyrrhonic Skepticism may find an analogy in balances that always preserve a fixed state of equilibrium, the method of Aquinas may be likened to balances, apparently true, but in reality having one scale slightly loaded, so that after any number of fluctuations it always returns to the same position.

We must not, however, forget that such a predetermination to reach a foregone conclusion is quite compatible with a considerable degree of Free-thought, and that for two reasons: 1. The very effort of research which enables a thinker to discover nineteen *cons* which may fitly be placed in antagonism to twenty *pros* is itself a distinctly Free-thinking process. The practice of perpetually finding contradictions to propositions which are nevertheless held to be true may not result in overthrowing them, but cannot be supposed to confirm them. The countermine is planned by one who knows perfectly well the position of the mine it is intended to counteract, and who is cognizant of the precise point at which it might, if allowed to advance, become fatally effective. The onlooker, who contemplates the dangerous tactics, may be pardoned for entertaining a suspicion of the perfect *bona fides* of the unscrupulous engineer. He may distrust his protestations that the mine, and not the countermine, represents his real sympathies. He may ask whether a little more energy or an effort less directed by confessed *arrière pensée* might not change the preponderance even of loaded balances. Besides, when the contending issues are so evenly poised, the determination to adhere to one rather than the other must needs partake of the character of an unconditional affirmative, and we have already seen that Aquinas's assent to ecclesiastical dogma was professedly volitional, and so far was in precisely the same category as the ultimate imperative of Kant or any other Skeptic. 2. Aquinas's controversial freedom may be regarded as the outcome of that very dogmatic fixity he has attained by means apparently so questionable. Having started with the deliberate acknowledgment of all the dogmas of the Church, and thus placed his loyalty to those dicta above suspicion, he may have considered himself more at liberty to criticize for criticism's sake the terms of those very propositions. Paraphrasing Augustine's motto —'Habe caritatem et fac quod vis'—Aquinas might have said, 'Habe fidem orthodoxam et dic quod vis.' This was undoubtedly

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his intellectual position, and it is one shared largely by Free-thinkers of his own and other dogmatic communions. Having fixed one leg of their intellectual compasses, these men conceive themselves at liberty to let the other range at liberty in any given direction. Just as a modern clerical assembly, having devoutly recited the Apostles' Creed standing, not unfrequently sits down and propounds doctrines and manifests a spirit in entire antagonism to Christianity—the hallowed influence of the initiatory act of faith is apparently supposed to sanction the after-display of unfaith. When we come to discuss Bishop Huet we shall find a remarkable instance of the extent to which this line of thought might be carried, but Aquinas, though a more moderate, is a sufficiently striking example of its operation. M. Jourdain has asserted that his sole ambition was to be orthodox. I should rather say that he was determined to profess his adherence to orthodoxy, and under cover of that adherence to exercise his reason with a very considerable amount of latitude. After what I have said in my paper on double-truth, it is needless to add here that I question neither the *bona fides* nor the justifiableness of that position. That Aquinas's method is related to double-truth cannot, I think, be gainsayed, but it does not amount to its definitive assertion. He repeatedly denies that contradictions in the same subject are admissible. But we must in fairness allow that there are many instances of antinomies of every degree of contrariety in his works. Indeed, both his master and himself may be taken as illustrations of a mode of truth-conception that cannot be called double, partly for the reason that it is multiple, *i.e.* when each dualism becomes merged and lost sight of among countless antagonisms of the same kind. Not that I think either Albert or Aquinas was conscious of the mutual irreconcilability of their varied premisses and conclusions.[1] They illustrate a psychological law that a principle which standing by itself, and consciously realized in a definite instance, would be dis-

[1] Dr. Prantl's diagnosis of Albert's manifold contradictions is equally applicable to Aquinas (*Logik*, iii. p. 89). His words are worth quoting: '. . . ja auch seine bisweilen ins endlose gehenden Distinctionen, welche man gerne an ihm rühmt, sind nicht sein Erzeugniss; die Auswahl welche er zwischen verschiedenen Ansichten trifft, beruht nicht auf einheitlich festgehaltenen Grundsätzen, sondern auf dem momentanen Drucke, welchen Autoritäten auf ihn ausübten, daher man sich auch nicht wundern darf, wenn man ihn häufig auf Widersprüchen ertappt.' On the other hand, Oischinger, in *Die Spekulative Theologie des Heiligen Thomas d'Aquin*, maintains that Aquinas's conclusions are discordant and unsustainable, for the reason that his speculative principles were drawn from Aristotle.

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claimed, may pass unquestioned when its operation is manifold both in degree and in kind. The intellectual, like the physical, vision often labours under an incapacity of discerning the wood on account of the trees.

But this eclectic multifariousness—the outcome of such a diversiform ratiocination—I regard as Aquinas's greatest merit, considered as a Schoolman. In an age when freedom of thought was so carefully watched and vehemently suspected, latitude of speculation within the ostensible limits of the Church broadly and philosophically defined, afforded an outlet for intellectual energies the importance of which we cannot over-estimate. The very conception of Christian truth as a fairly open field of discussion, or at least one that did not exclude alien methods of thought, could not but prepossess ingenuous and liberal minds in its favour. Thereby was asserted the worth and dignity of all truth, no matter whence originated or by whom promulgated. Something of the feudal idea of material prowess and superiority seems to have entered into this predilection for free discussion. It was the outcome of a firm persuasion that truth is in its nature Divine and supreme, and for this reason is able—like the most powerful knight in a tournament—to hold its own against all comers. This was Aquinas's conception of Christianity, and the source of his broad cosmopolitan sympathies. The doctrines of the Church he believed to be true, both to the investigation of reason and to the spiritual intuition of faith, and on this ground he regarded them as impregnable to all attacks from whatsoever side they might arise. The notion that Christianity as a Divine communication of truth could be injured by contact with Aristotle, Avicenna, or any other non-Christian but genuine truth-seeker, he would have spurned with contempt. His Gentile sympathies were often charged against him by men of narrower views, but they formed an integral and indissoluble portion of his intellectual breadth. He probably would not have yielded so willing an assent to some of the dogmas of the Church had he considered himself altogether debarred from the rational compensations of philosophy. The very preponderance of faith in his equilibration of faith and reason rendered it the more needful to allow reason all the influence it could possibly possess short of that ultimate supremacy. Accordingly, Aquinas is the thinker of all others who best represents the Catholicity of Romanism—I mean that all-inclusive, variously sympathetic latitudinarianism which every institution intended for humanity ought indubitably to possess. That the scope and outline of his collective beliefs were intentionally multifarious we

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have already acknowledged, and we must accept their mutual contradictories as an essential portion of such a comprehensive standpoint. No doubt his inconsistencies are both numerous and startling. The most popular edition of his greatest work, the 'Summa Theologica,' is preceded by a table in which the antinomies (contained in that work alone) are duly catalogued and, in attempt, reconciled. How far Aquinas would have approved the effort to harmonize his discrepant utterances appears to me doubtful. From his ardent sympathy with diverse, many-sided aspects of truth, we may infer his belief that on most moot points of speculation no simple consistent solution is obtainable, or for that matter desirable. His conception of Deity, as we have seen, included manifoldness as an essential characteristic, and he extended the same attribute in kind to minor intelligences, not excluding the human mind. That the dissonance and incongruity thence resulting has been animadverted upon is no more than we might expect. Indeed, the diversity of his views is curiously reflected both in his own destiny and in the various opinions of his commentators. After being stigmatized as a heretic by his own Church, he has since been canonized as a saint. His methods and conclusions have been accepted as ultimate tests of Catholic truth, and denounced as the outcome of extreme Skepticism.[1] Could he have foreseen the diversiform character of the judgment of posterity concerning him, he might have regarded it as an additional argument for the multifariousness of truth and the individual disparity of all intelligences. Thus Petavius, with others of his co-religionists, considered him heretical on the subject of the Trinity and other dogmas of the Church. Casimir Oudin said that his works were the offspring of Scholastic garrulity. Brücker[2] complained that his Christianity was tainted with Greek and Arab philosophy. St. Cyran said that he reasoned too much. Bishop Huet pronounced him a Pyrrhonist. Neander considered him a semi-Rationalist. Hauréau regards him as a semi-Materialist, and on the question of human free-will a Pelagian. While Dean Milman thus characterizes him: 'He is nearly as consummate a Skeptic, almost Atheist, as he is a divine and theologian.'[3] On the other hand, his works have been received with favour by thinkers of widely distinct sympathies. The ethical part of his 'Summa,' called

[1] On the adverse estimates of Aquinas, considered from a Romanist standpoint, see, *inter alia*, the Dissertations of De Rubeis, appended to the *Summa, Op. om.* vol. vii. pt. ii. pp. 1274-1311, and vol. ix. p. 642, &c.

[2] *Historia Philosophiæ*, vol. iii. p. 805.

[3] *Latin Christianity*, vol. vi. p. 283.

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the 'Secunda Secundæ,'[1] has been loudly applauded by moralists who have looked coldly on his theological disquisitions. Protestant jurists, like Grotius and Puffendorf, and Romanist jurists like Budæus and Vives, regarded it as an authority of no small weight. It is said also to have formed the favourite reading of some eminent English ecclesiastics, as, *e.g.* Bishop Sanderson. While as to his writings in general, Rationalists, Pietists, Mystics, and Skeptics have concurred in extolling the 'angel of the Schools.' Not only Liberal Catholics, as Erasmus, Bossuet, Fénelon, Arnauld, but thinkers generally opposed to ecclesiastical dogma, have agreed in recognising Aquinas's good sense, his moderation, his immense learning, his generous and undogmatic spirit. Thus he was the favourite of Descartes, Giordano Bruno, Pomponazzi, Campanella, and La-Mothe-le-Vayer. Indeed, whatever deduction may be drawn from the circumstance as to his own intellectual proclivities, it must be admitted that Aquinas has generally been the favourite divine of modern Skeptics.

Closing this tripartite essay, I once more revert to my introductory apologue. I trust I have satisfactorily established this part of my thesis, that Aquinas's method is suggestive of and contributory to Free-thought, and is thus closely related to the idealism of Erigena and the bolder rationalism of Abelard. The 'angel of the Schools,' like the balancing bird in the cage, virtually annihilates the confining bars by the perpetual motion of his wings, and his delight in his own power of levitation. In other words, Aquinas is an admirable example of the mental freedom which necessarily springs from eclecticism and broad sympathies; from the perspicacity which recognises, and the equipoising instinct that weighs, the different aspects of every truth; from the vivid imagination which not only seizes but elaborates and intensifies alien standpoints; from the indifference to exclusive, one-sided dogma which marks the genuine philosopher; lastly, from the absolute confidence in truth, which believes in its ultimate superiority when allowed a fair field and ample scope of reason.

. . . . . .

TREVOR (folding up his MS.). Now to which of these three types of thinkers—we may call them the intensive, the protensive, and extensive—shall we award the credit of achieving the greatest amount of intellectual freedom, or

[1] This somewhat puzzling designation means the second or ethical division of part ii. of the *Summa Theologica*. In Migne's edition it takes up the whole of vol. iii.

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which of the three birds succeeds best in annulling the iron bars of his prison, the singing, cage-forcing, or balancing bird?

MISS LEYCESTER. It appears to me that all those succeed equally in ignoring their confinement. Each might quote for itself Lovelace's verses with but a slight adaptation :—

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage,
Minds deep and bold and large all take
That for an hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone that soar above
Enjoy such liberty.

But as a matter of personal taste I should prefer the freedom born of idealism. The power to fuse and blend all that is circumscribed, painful, embarrassing in our lot, in some infinite homogeneous pleasant environment, seems to me very valuable. One could hardly suppose that Erigena, for instance, could have been greatly incommoded by any amount of dogma.

HARRINGTON. I knew that would be your choice; but give me the protensive or the forward intellect—the man who will not condescend to the subtleties and evasions of the idealists, nor deign to hide his head in the sands in order to enjoy the delusion that he is unseen. Abelard—taking him in his prime—appears to me a far loftier type of thinker than either Erigena or Aquinas. He is the Prometheus Vinctus of the Schoolmen—'bound' not by the decrees of Olympus, but by the hardly less ignoble chains of Papal sacerdotalism.

ARUNDEL. Well, my selection would be Aquinas—the Broad-Church man of the Middle Ages. I own to despising entirely the customary vituperation of eclectics as if they were outcasts of philosophy. Truth, as it exists within or without us, seems to me like chemical elements—generally found in nature as compounds, and only attaining simplicity by means of laborious analysis. Simplicity is not its natural but artificial condition, and, when we succeed in detaching a single truth from its concomitant qualities, it is just as ready

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to rush into unison with them again as a chemical element is to relapse into its composite condition. But if truth have thus a more or less mixed character, then clearly the best mode of comprehending it in its fulness is eclecticism, a subjective many-sidedness corresponding with the objective multitudinousness. Indeed, the eclectic faculty—the power of grasping every truth by its more probable aspects, and of assimilating truths or portions of a truth diverse from each other—appears to me higher and rarer than almost any other class of intellect—higher, *e.g.* than the idealistic. Any one might by refining, allegorizing, &c. reduce all the articles of a creed into so many airy nothings: the difficulty seems to me to accept dogmas in their customary form, at least with only obtrusive angles chipped off, and afterwards to put them together into a coherent superstructure.

HARRINGTON. Precisely so, if you are sure of the coherence. But this quality in Aquinas's case at least seems to have been conspicuous by its absence. . . . I confess I cannot share your opinion that the Aquinas type of mind is rarest, nor does it always imply either an omnivorous appetite for knowledge or an abnormal capacity for containing it. It is just as often the outcome of ignorance or of an undisciplined intellect. Small minds are not averse in proportion to their size to assimilating discordant beliefs. Perhaps, if I may say so without offence, it is precisely this class of intellect that is most common with clerics of all kinds. I have heard the remark made that three-fourths of the clergy 'of all denominations' are unconscious syncretists. Without realizing it, they are monotheists and polytheists, Christians and Manichæans, Calvinists and Arminians, and some half-dozen more of irreconcilable beliefs, all at one time.

TREVOR. Well, we must remember what we said on a former occasion as to the happy rarity of mental dyspepsia. At present our question relates not to the highest type of mind inherently, but to that which is able to secure the greatest amount of freedom in presence of a large body of dogmatic belief such as that professed by the Church of Rome. Apart from this standpoint, I should say Abelard's as the analytical intellect stands highest, but in relation to Church

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dogma, and assuming the necessity of submitting to its requirements, I should hold Aquinas's as the most convenient type of intellect. The two thinkers are related to each other, so far as primary mental aptitudes are concerned, as Lessing to Goethe.

MISS LEYCESTER. But the quality that especially availed Aquinas in his eclecticism and adjustment of diversiform belief was precisely that for which Erigena is most remarkable—I mean his metaphysical aptitudes, his devout feeling, and powerful imagination. Hence we have that breadth and comprehensiveness of view which indeed distinguishes not only Aquinas but all thinkers who find themselves at home among dogmas and creeds, against which their reason might if employed unconditionally and unscrupulously recalcitrate. Take, *e.g.* the two chief divisions of modern Christianity, Romanism and Protestantism: not a few of the profounder intellects which have embraced both one and the other have been enabled to do so by the possession of this idealistic and imaginative faculty. This is especially seen when the dogmas are in their common acceptation difficult or self-contradictory. What a number of metaphysical interpretations of the Trinity, for instance, have commended themselves to thinkers of various aptitudes, ages, and schools! What a variety of acceptations of the Incarnation—the synthesis of the Divine and human—have been propounded by thinkers not only of different times and countries but even of different religions! No doubt to the narrow-minded dogmatist there is little distinction between losing the definite outline of a dogma in a halo of imagination or sentiment and directly impugning it. For him it is not enough that the dogma should be affirmed in any manner: he must needs insist on the special form in which he himself, whatever his intellectual power, is able to conceive it.

ARUNDEL. Thanks, Miss Leycester! You have suggested a thought which appears to me of considerable importance. We are all agreed more or less that the imperative claims of a religion should be marked by simplicity and self-evident rationality, and would rather go for our Christianity to the Sermon on the Mount than to the 'Summa' of Aquinas. But

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at the same time his eclecticism and its methods possess another advantage in addition to their multifariousness, which, as broad-thinkers, we cannot refuse to concede—I mean the undoubted effect of the endless distinctions and subtle refinements of scholasticism as a mental gymnastic. However mischievous in other respects, the method was calculated to induce a flexibility of thought, to develop a keen eye for gradations and distinctions in all subject-matters of speculation, and a nice apprehension of delicate *nuances* in their verbal expression, together with such a comprehensive insight into every side of a question as to exhaust readily and completely its ratiocinative resources. Talleyrand used to ascribe the undoubted ability of mediæval diplomatists, who were mostly clerics, as well as of their ecclesiastical brethren of more recent times, to their scholastic training. The ablest diplomatist in English history was, in my opinion, Cardinal Wolsey. It may not be tracing cause and effect too curiously if we were to ask how much the political polity, diplomatic usages, &c. of the foremost European states are owing, through the clerical statecraft of some centuries ago, to the voluminous works and oftentimes non-luminous methods of the Schoolmen.

HARRINGTON. Talleyrand was probably right, but you must take the character of that clerical diplomacy as a whole before pronouncing its verdict. If scholastic methods tended to evolve intellectual acumen and dexterity, an unrivalled tact and suppleness in urging one's own opinions and interests, they also helped to promote an unprincipled astuteness—a cynical contempt for candour and honesty, and an unscrupulous employment of sophistry, chicane, and tergiversation from which I hope our modern diplomacy is to a great extent free. Whoever reads the history of the Italian States from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, or, for that matter, the mediæval chronicles of any of the great states of Europe, will entertain no very high opinion of the clerically trained statesmen and diplomatists who directed their politics. Talleyrand himself, with his clerical education and affinities, is an apt illustration of that Machiavellianism which is in politics what Jesuit casuistry is in religion.

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Could we trace their statecraft directly to ecclesiastical training, such characters as Machiavelli, Wolsey, and Talleyrand clearly prove that the methods of the Schoolmen and their successors tend to produce not only the legitimate freedom of thought Dr. Trevor claimed for them, but that species of Skepticism which is worse than all others—I mean the contemptuous disregard of all moral obligations.

ARUNDEL. By crediting scholastic methods with the incidental merit of imparting intellectual versatility, I of course did not mean to go beyond those qualities which in the complicated relations of political and social life may be honourably as well as usefully employed. I meant such virtues as tact, urbanity, common-sense, social adroitness, the genial and courteous appreciation of adverse positions or parties, which might be discharged without injury to the primary claims of veracity. . . . I have myself scant respect for the personal characters of Wolsey or of Talleyrand—the latter especially seems to me the Mephistopheles of modern diplomacy.

MRS. HARRINGTON. I must say that the methods of the Schoolmen are receiving hard measure at your hands, considering that the object of Dr. Trevor's paper was to show the services they rendered to the cause of Free-thought. We have often been told that Jesuit casuistry is the offspring of Scholasticism: now we are informed that the selfish scheming of statesmen may be traced to the same origin. This additional inculpation is surely needless. The very position of a diplomatist demands an eager watchfulness for his country's interests, which in many cases would degenerate into craftiness. Sir Henry Wotton's witty definition of an ambassador as a man 'sent to lie abroad for the good of his country' recognises the inherent nature of his temptations and his possible delinquencies.

TREVOR. Well reminded, Mrs. Harrington. I think it quite time to give our pendulum an impulse in the opposite direction. When criticizing the ἦθος of Scholasticism with its countless distinctions and abstractions, we must bear in mind that the resultant mischief was by no means equal to what we might have anticipated from a survey of its un-

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rivalled resources. The apparatus of the Schoolmen for intellectual sleight-of-hand performances has never been equalled. I think it will amuse you if I cull a few sentences from a famous controversialist of the seventeenth century [1] on this point, albeit remembering that they are the utterances of a vigorous and not very discriminating polemic. Speaking of Scholasticism he says, 'What a desolate wilderness was it, covered with briars and thorns, darkness and obscurity! Monstrous distinctions and multitudes of abstractions were introduced into philosophy. There you might find *entia rationis*, *objectivè*, *subjectivè*, and *effectivè*; and the distinction of a distinction into that which is *realis*, and what they call *rationis*, and this latter is either a distinction *rationis ratiocinantis*, or *rationis ratiocinatæ*. Then follow, ranged in due order, your *greater and lesser realities*, *modal entities*, *formalities*, then *acts*, whether *substantial*, *accidental*, *prime*, *secondary*, *compounded*, *divided*, *signatè*, *exercitè*; then the *states*, *amplications*, principles of *individuation*, *suppositalitys*, *signate matter*, *hœcceitys*, *ecceitys*, *petreitys*, *quiddityes*, *identitys*, *desires after a form*, *a dread of a vacuum*, and whole cart-loads of qualitys. But it's impossible to number up all the elegancys of the *Albertists*, *Occamists*, *Thomists*, *Scotists*, *Reals*, and *Nominals*. Such wretched work have these gentlemen made, both in philosophy and theology, by mangling and showing them in vizards and masquerades, and by false lights; that instead of seeing 'em in their native loveliness and beauty, you can discover little or nothing of 'em in their writings, but paint, obscurity, and deformity.' Now allowing, as we must, the substantial truth of this invective, we must acknowledge that it is not so wonderful that Scholasticism should have engendered Skepticism as that its influence in this direction was so limited. Erigena, Abelard, and Aquinas are the most advanced thinkers among the Schoolmen, but it would not be right to regard their freedom as more than semi-Skepticism.

HARRINGTON. But you forget, Doctor, what you have

[1] *A Discourse of Logomachys*, by S. Werenfelsius, translated into English. London, 1711. P. 101.

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more than once insisted on, that the evils of these scholastic subtleties lay in their affinity to the dogmas to which they are related. As mere speculations they were, if barren, in other respects innocent; but when they claimed the consistency and definiteness of dogmas, they became tyrannical. You remember what Rabelais says on this very point in his description of the furred law-cats, and what they were enabled to do by the power of the sixth essence, *i.e.* scholastic abstractions: 'Among them reigns the sixth essence, by means of which they grip all, devour all, burn all, draw all, hang all, quarter all, behead all, murder all, imprison all,' &c.[1]

Miss Leycester. No doubt 'the sixth essence' has imprisoned and murdered not a few noble spirits, as our Skeptical researches will all too sufficiently attest. But while we are treating the outcomes of Scholasticism, I should like more light thrown on its more legitimate scope, I mean its influence on after-theology, science, and language.

Trevor. Such a field of discussion would be much too wide for our purpose. On the first point you might read Bishop Hampden's Bampton Lectures, which, however, seems inclined to exaggerate the influence of Scholasticism on subsequent theology. The good bishop appears not to have seen that the abstractions and distinctions which he rightly complained had disturbed the peace of the Church are not exclusively the outcome of Scholasticism; for—(1) they are partly inherent in the nature of all speculative theology; (2) they took their rise in the earliest history of the Church—the first Schoolman is St. Paul; (3) they were increased by the introduction of dialectic long before the era of Scholasticism, as we saw in the case of Augustine.

Harrington. By the way, Doctor, I feel inclined to demur to your classification of Aquinas as an eclectic. According to your own admission this character can only be assigned him with the reservation—a somewhat large one—of the whole dogmatic belief of the Romish Church. I cannot share your opinion that what you term his eclecticism diminished to any serious extent his belief in the Church,

[1] *Pant.* book v. chap. xi.

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though something, no doubt, should be allowed for his basing his theological beliefs on faith and volition rather than on reason. My notion of an eclectic is a man who without foregone conclusions of any sort deliberately surveys all accessible modes of thought and chooses from each his own 'hortus siccus' of definitive convictions.

TREVOR. Starting, I suppose, with the assumption that everything is an open question. But there is nothing to show that Aquinas may not have adopted this method. There was so much ratiocination in his intellectual formation as to make it even probable. His acceptation of the dogmas of the Church may therefore have been based on his own independent investigation of their evidences, just as his reception of Aristotle's teachings was. A determined adhesion to a creed does not conflict with a thinker's eclecticism, provided its articles were originally acquired eclectically, and this I am fully sure was the case with Aquinas.

ARUNDEL. What appears to me to prove Aquinas's taste for eclecticism is his undoubted multifariousness by which his thought seems distinguished from the narrower but more reasoned systems of Erigena and Abelard. My motive for inclining to eclecticism in religious belief is that I distrust the effects of rigid logic on theology. Every system of dialectical theology that pursues its course of dry abstract syllogizing without taking thought of qualifications, conditions, &c. seems to land one in a moral *cul-de-sac*. Take, *e.g.* sacerdotalism, Roman or Anglican, grant its premisses, and you cannot dispute its conclusions; but the system is fatal to intellectual freedom or progress. Or take bibliolatry, allow all its postulates, and you are irretrievably entangled in the meshes of a servile and imbecile literalism. Or once more, take Calvinism, nothing can be dialectically better founded, as Jonathan Edwards long ago demonstrated; but what havoc does it not make with all our instinctive convictions of God and His attributes, and of the sanctions of morality! What makes logic so mischievous in the domain of theology is, I suppose, the fact mentioned by Harrington just now, that its procedures become tainted with the assumed infallibility of its conclusions.

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TREVOR. As a case in point, I may mention that I once heard a Romanist thus trace the genesis of the immaculate conception. 1. Sinlessness of Christ. 2. His Divine nature. 3. His Incarnation. 4. Perpetual virginity of Mary. 5. Her superhuman nature. 6. The immaculate conception. Of course the dialectical process ought not to have stopped at that stage. There ought to be an indefinite regress of the same material causes of assumed spiritual facts. Perhaps if Romanism ever again resumes her course of doctrinal development, which for the time being seems arrested, we shall have some future Pope proclaiming the immaculate conception of the Virgin's mother and grandmother.

ARUNDEL. I presume your remark as to arrested dogma-growth refers to the new Pope (Leo XIII.) and his allocutions in favour of Aquinas. Romanists are now assured by infallibility that our eclectic must be regarded as their accepted teacher. What, I wonder, will be the effect of that movement on the doctrinal system of the Church? Is it an advance or a retrogression?

TREVOR. Undoubtedly an advance in respect of general culture, liberal thought, and comparative toleration, but a retrogression in point of dogmatic evolution. The selection of Aquinas as the ultimate authority of the Church would be absolutely fatal to its infallibility, if we could only secure his being studied by thoughtful and critical intellects.

HARRINGTON. I believe it is the science and philosophy of Aquinas on which the Pope lays especial stress. He appears to think that the confessed proclivities of the 'angel of the Schools' to reason and physical science would be regarded as an adequate concession to the claims of modern science.

TREVOR. Aquinas's science is Aristotelianism with a slight tincture of Arabic philosophy. But it is utterly inconceivable that any disciple of modern science should be content to limit its scope by the attainments of Greek science some four centuries before the Christian era, still less that he should recur to the *à priori* and deductive methods then in use. Some portions perhaps of Aquinas's teaching might still obtain recognition by modern thinkers, *e.g.* parts of his

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psychology, most of his ethical teaching, the greater part of his demonstration of God's existence and of the immortality of the soul; but as a whole his thought and methods are just as impossible of resuscitation in modern Europe as are the manners and institutions of the thirteenth century. The best result of the renewed attention to Aquinas would be to infuse into those scientists who have so long been vainly trying to reconcile the teachings of science with the claims of an infallible Church a little of Aquinas's ingenuous, truth-loving spirit. I have not the least doubt, if he lived in our day, no demands of ecclesiasticism would have made him forego the clear teachings of physical science. His devotion to Aristotle and his leanings to materialism suffice to prove that.

MISS LEYCESTER. I want to ask Mr. Arundel to explain to us his meaning when he said that all large views of truth are necessarily composite—thence drawing an argument in favour of eclecticism.

ARUNDEL. I can best illustrate my meaning by a reference to Goethe's conversations with Eckermann. You remember the passage where Goethe shows his friend a landscape of Rubens representing a summer evening, and when Eckermann, after admiring the fidelity of its different details, suggested that it was copied from nature, Goethe answered, 'Certainly not! A picture so perfect is never seen in nature.' He goes on to say that Rubens carried all nature about with him in his memory, and that was the reason why there was so much truth in the whole as well as in the parts of his landscapes. As a composition, the picture was the outcome of the poetic mind of the painter. Now what Goethe said of Rubens's landscapes, and what Claude claimed for his own when he styled a collection of them *Liber Veritatis*, I should say of all large views or presentations of truth, viz. they are ideal and composite—the subjective constructions and arrangements of single isolated truths. No doubt the truths, like the figures and groups in the landscape, exist independently, but their artistic grouping and collocation are the work of the creative, idealizing intelligence. Aquinas appears to have been endowed with

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that plastic ideal faculty. His mind was like an enormous canvas whereon was delineated a broad many-hued landscape like one of Claude's, *e.g.* a mosaic of lights and shadows picturesquely crowded with different objects animate and inanimate; and if he placed prominently as foreground objects the doctrines of the Church, in the background may be discerned a copious variety of other objects representing Gentile and other collateral aspects of those same doctrines.

HARRINGTON. Aquinas's definition of truth was the common scholastic one—the equation or perfect assimilation of the subject knowing with the object known. I hardly see how he would have approved a definition of truth that denies its actual existence, in the form contemplated, in nature.

ARUNDEL. That depends on whether he ever tried to present all or most of his truths as objects with different distances, and colours as well as varying degrees of light and shade, on a single canvas. His eclecticism, I suspect, was unconscious.

MISS LEYCESTER. For my part I quite approve of your pictorial illustration of eclecticism. It makes ideality of prime importance in the mental presentment of truth. But how do you reconcile your approval of eclecticism and multifariousness with your appreciation of simplicity in the fundamentals of religious belief?

ARUNDEL. Quite easily. Take, *e.g.* the first commandment of the Christian code—love to God. Nothing can be simpler than its mere enunciation. But apply reason and experience to the primary conception of God, and what is the result? The creation of a theology with its manifold aspects and countless ramifications. We seem compelled to ascribe to God different attributes to bring Him into direct relation with nature and its evolution, with humanity and its history, with peoples of different races and creeds, with the imperative needs of our spiritual instincts and feelings, with the demands of human ethics and social politics, &c., so that what was simple in primary definition becomes in ultimate ratiocination multiple, or rather the simplicity is transmuted into homogeneousness—the ideal quality of the whole, instead

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of the characteristic of each separate part. This is precisely the way in which Rubens, Claude, and all the great landscape painters treat nature. As it actually exists, nature is not discernible in their compositions considered as wholes. It is rationalized and idealized, reformed and rearranged, transposed and transmuted, by the imaginative faculties and eclectic instincts of the artists.

MISS LEYCESTER. But I thought you distrusted the functions of idealism?

ARUNDEL. So I do when it claims not to *re*present Nature, but to outvie, caricature, or transcend her. A landscape, *e.g.* in which all the known laws of nature, of lights and shadows, were reversed, or in which the objects figured were impossible chimeras, would be loathsome to me.

HARRINGTON. Well, after your encomium of eclecticism you must be more guarded in your strictures on individualism. I suppose you would grant that every man must needs construct his own representation of physical and metaphysical truth, and hence the likelihood that no two eclecticisms, if I may coin the word, are precisely alike.

ARUNDEL. Not necessarily. A society or community *might* 'eclect' for valid reasons shown, though I grant that the function pertains more properly to the individual. If you pressed me on the point I might, however, take refuge in an argument I have often heard from Dr. Trevor and yourself, viz. that individualism can only be partial and circumscribed. Take again my illustration of landscape-painting. Nothing can well be more distinct than the characteristics of different painters, *e.g.* Claude and Rembrandt. But in each case you have nature and natural objects, though regarded from different standpoints and with a considerable dissimilarity of treatment. Similarly external truths, theological or other, expressed in the same terms or possessing modes of presentation exactly alike, must needs affect different receptivities in at least nearly the same manner. The distinction between individuals will be only in arrangement, colouring, shading, &c.

TREVOR. Quite enough, however, to establish an individualism which might in many cases become Skeptical. But

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as you have pleaded guilty to a sympathetic construction of eclecticism, we have no right to press your ratiocination. An eclectic *ex vi termini* is not pledged to uniform or consistent reasoning. . . . As to the subject-matter of my paper, we seem to have arrived at varying conclusions with regard to that kind of freedom which is best able to withstand the attacks of extreme dogma. But we are all agreed that the human mind, whenever it is sufficiently strong and independent, will discover and insist on some method of asserting its freedom.

. . . . . .

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EVENING X.

WILLIAM OF OCKAM.

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Ἀρχὴ μαθήσεως ζήτησις, καὶ ῥίζα τῆς ἐπὶ τισὶν ἀγνοουμένοις συνέσεως, ἡ περὶ αὐτῶν ἐκπόρησις.

ST. CYRILL. *Comm. in Johan.* l. ii. ch. iv. p. 180, *Op. om.* tom. iv. Paris 1638.

Mephist. Im Ganzen—haltet euch an Worte!
Dann geht ihr durch die sichre Pforte
Zum Tempel der Gewissheit ein.
Schüler. Doch ein Begriff muss bei dem Worte sein.
Mephist. Schon gut! Nur muss man sich nicht allzu ängstlich quälen;
Dann eben wo Begriffe fehlen,
Da stellt ein Wort zur rechten Zeit sich ein.
Mit Worten lässt sich trefflich streiten,
Mit Worten ein System bereiten,
An Worte lässt sich trefflich glauben,
Von einem Wort lässt sich kein Iota rauben.

GOETHE, *Faust.*

'Secta nominalium omnium inter scholasticas profundissima, et hodiernæ reformatæ philosophandi rationi congruentissima.'

LEIBNITZ.

'La querelle du Réalisme et du Nominalisme est d'une haute importance, non-seulement pour l'étude historique, mais pour la solution du problème de la certitude.'

A. FRANCK, *De la Certitude*, p. 149.

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EVENING X.

WILLIAM OF OCKAM.[1]

TREVOR. Our subject to-night—William of Ockam—has several points of peculiar interest for us. Not only does he possess the Skeptical instinct needed as a qualification to appear before us—for he is our special representative of nominalistic or verbal Skepticism—but he is an Englishman, the founder of a considerable school of Free-thought, a precursor of the Reformation both on its philosophic and its religious sides, and a vigorous antagonist of the Papacy—in

[1] The following are the authorities employed in this chapter :—

I. *Quæst. super* iv. *Libr. Sententiarum* (Lyons 1495), including also the smaller treatises, *Super Potestate Summi Pontificis* and *Centilogium*, &c.

II. *Quodlibeta* and *De Sacramento Altaris*. Strassburg 1591.

III. *Opus Dialog.* lib. vii.: *De Imp. et Pont. Majestate: Compendium Errorum Jo. Papæ* xxii.: *Opus Nonaginta Dierum.* Lyons 1494, &c. The contents of the last-named volume are reprinted in the first volume of *Goldasti Monarchia.* 3 vols. folio. Frankfort 1614.

The references in the following Essay are to Goldast's reprint.

Ockam's logical works are sufficiently analyzed and represented by copious extracts in Prantl, *Gesch. d. Logik*, vol. iii. pp. 327–420.

Gabriel Biel Collectorium, &c. *super libr.* iv. *Sent.* 1527. The importance of this work, for a complete study of Ockam, is now fully acknowledged. Unfortunately, like all nominalistic authorities, it is exceedingly rare.

D'Argentré, *Coll. Jud.* 3 vols. fol. Paris 1728.

Hauréau, *Hist. de la Phil. Scol.* vol. ii. pp. 418–74

Rousselot, *Études sur la Phil. dans le Moyen Age*, vol. iii. pp. 200–72.

Riezler, *Die Literarischen Widersacher der Päpste*, &c. Leipzig 1874.

Contzen, *Gesch. der Volkswirthschaftlichen Literatur im Mittelalter*, pp. 120–30.

Stöckl (Alb.), *Gesch. d. Phil. im Mittelalter*, vol. ii. 2, pp. 986–1021.

C. Jourdain, *La Philosophie de Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, ii. pp. 174–207.

The more general works of reference, Histories of Philosophy, Church Histories, Dictionary Articles, &c. are noted at the bottom of the page.

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short, he unites in his own person most of the elements of Free-inquiry which were current in the fourteenth century.

MISS LEYCESTER. I once heard a learned German say—speaking of mediæval thinkers—that the realists were all Pantheists, and the nominalists all Skeptics. Is not that assertion too sweeping?

TREVOR. Not if you regard it as indicating tendencies rather than affirming definitive and avowed conclusions. Realism, or the principle that asserts the independent existence of metaphysical or linguistic abstractions, is no doubt the royal road to Pantheism; while nominalism, or the principle which denies metaphysics, vivisects its ideas, and bases its abstractions on sensation, experience, and human convention, is clearly Skeptical. As to particular instances, we have already seen what the conceptualism of Abelard—itself a form of nominalism—meant, and we shall soon perceive the real import of Ockam's nominalism in the direction of theological and philosophical negation. On the other hand, all the essential principles of Spinoza have been found in Duns Scotus and Albert the Great.[1]

HARRINGTON. I have been more than once forcibly struck with the fact that all our great English philosophers are nominalists, beginning with Roger Bacon in the thirteenth century, and ending with John Stuart Mill in our own day. In fact, England seems to have been the purveyor-general of nominalism and experience-philosophy to the thought of modern Europe.

ARUNDEL. She has not limited herself to the comparatively innocent commodities you have mentioned, but on two occasions at least she has supplied Continental speculation with a quantity of downright Skepticism—(1) indirectly by the influence of the English Deists in France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; (2) and more immediately by the influence of Hume on the thought of France and Germany in the eighteenth century.

TREVOR. I am not sufficiently skilled in ethnology to be able to assign racial causes for such a fact, but it would

[1] See Dr. M. Joël's interesting essays on this subject in his *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie.*

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appear that those countries in which the originally most distinct branches of the Aryan race have intermingled to the greatest extent, exhibit the fullest intellectual vigour as well as the freest instincts. Take, *e.g.* England, where the Teuton and Latin elements have blended most equally. I don't mean to say that we are in advance of other European nations in point of intellectual research—I know we are not. But I have no hesitation in saying that in the combination of intellectual progress with political freedom we are in the van of European nations.

ARUNDEL. Amen! Only allow the ethnological fact to qualify your usual animadversions of the backwardness of English general culture. After all, a capacity for intellectual progress is of no use except in a country where thought is, by its political constitution, free. . . . As to our Skeptics, were we to separate those of modern times on our list into their several nationalities, we should find that most of them are Frenchmen or Italians. No doubt there is the usual affinity between their general and philosophical character. Both are marked by excitability and impulsiveness—an absence of caution, moderation, and restraint. An average French or Italian Radical is almost invariably a complete Skeptic. There seem to be some elements in the Celtic character, especially when purest, favourable to Skepticism. . . . On the other hand, the Englishman's cold temperament, his intellectual caution, his practical tendencies, impart to his Skepticism a superficial character. Hume was, of course, a Scotchman and therefore a Celt, besides being by foreign residence a half-naturalized Frenchman.

HARRINGTON. You must not found a theory of the relation of Skepticism to nationality merely from the names in our list. We could easily have increased, *e.g.* our English contingent, by including some of the English Deists who were certainly partial Skeptics, for instance, Collins, Tindal, Toland, Bolingbroke, Hobbes, and Shaftesbury. Moreover, all the chief Italian philosophers since the time of Giordano Bruno have been idealists. For my part I am inclined to doubt whether any reliable conclusion on this point is possible.

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MISS LEYCESTER. Besides, the generalization which assumes that the impetuosity and mobility of the Latin races tend to Skepticism is counterbalanced by the fact that Christianity has found in those very races, and probably in virtue of their emotional impressionability, her most fervent believers, defenders, and martys. So that the same impulsiveness which generates Free-thought may by being shunted on another line of rails, so to speak, induce Pietistic enthusiasm.

MRS. HARRINGTON. I remember once, when puzzled in some youthful mediæval studies by finding a mention of realists and nominalists, asking a learned divine, a friend of my father's, what the distinction between the rival sectaries was. I shall never forget his answer, delivered with the mingled unction and pomposity of the old school of divines: 'My dear young lady, realists are so termed because they believed in realities; nominalists, because they believed only in names.' Of course I was not much enlightened by the elucidation.

TREVOR. It was certainly an *ex parte* definition. If you could have propounded the same question to the ghost of Ockam, you might conceivably have got the answer, 'Realists are so called because on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, they believe in *unrealities*, while nominalists believe only in real things.' There has been, I need not say, an inversion of both names and meanings since the time of Ockam, though the process has been quite in harmony with his philosophy. What mediæval metaphysicians thought real have now come to be classed as mainly nominal, and the things then reputed nominal have now come to be considered real. Realism in art, *e.g.* is a standpoint which would have commended itself more to mediæval nominalists than realists.

MISS LEYCESTER. The change reminds me of Wordsworth's lament over the decay of idealism in his own intellectual progress. Indeed, his incomparable 'Ode to Immortality' symbolizes also the general transition of thought from metaphysics to physics in the history of modern philosophy.

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The youth who daily farther from the East
Must travel still is nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended.
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

HARRINGTON. No doubt idealism cannot be said to be as prevalent in this age of waning theological beliefs as in the so-called 'Ages of Faith.' Men of science prefer 'the light of common day' to the most brilliant morning star, or the most gorgeous 'daffodil sky' that the imagination of poet ever conceived. But we need have no fear as to its ultimate disappearance. Its power, nay its absolute necessity in poetry and art as well as in religion and philosophy, is far too great to permit, even as a contingency, the hypothesis of its extinction. Indeed, I am inclined to regard the total amount of the idealistic and imaginative elements among cultured societies as an invariable quantity; the difference between one epoch and another in this particular being rather apparent than real, and consisting in a difference of direction. Thus the idealism which our forefathers expended entirely on religion is now spread over the wider area of art, poetry, music, and general æsthetic culture.

Moreover, we must bear in mind the invaluable services nominalism has rendered to science in analyzing the numberless *à priori* beliefs and ideal conceptions of which mediæval thought was so full. Nominalism entered on a contest with all these supersensual phantasms of the dark ages, just as some knight of chivalry armed himself against the supernatural giants, enchanters, wizards, griffins, dragons, hobgoblins, and all the other unreal apparitions of the time.

ARUNDEL. You have just reminded me of an interpretation I once heard given of Don Quixote, viz. that it represents in the perpetual play of cross-purposes between the knight and his trusty squire the different standpoints of realism and nominalism. First we have Don Quixote like an extreme realist idealizing, sublimating, beautifying, and magnifying what is small, obscure, mean, and homely; and next comes Sancho Panza like a Skeptical nominalist with his native

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shrewdness, his materializing instincts, his reliance on what can be seen, touched, and tasted, and in general his tendency to reduce all idealities to their lowest denomination.

MISS LEYCESTER. Well, at all events, give me the hidalgo with all his crack-brained eccentricities rather than the crass animalism of Sancho Panza. For my part, I think the illustration is altogether in favour of realism. All the high impulses, the ideal imaginings of Don Quixote, are, notwithstanding their fantastic garb, unselfish and generous, while the aims and desires of Sancho are, as a rule, utterly sordid and sensual. While Don Quixote, clad in his patched armour, and mounted on his sorry steed, rides forth for the destruction of tyrants and the relief of the oppressed, transmuting, by the omnipotent wand of his imagination, windmills into giants, country girls to high-born ladies, and wayside inns to enchanted castles, in a word, glorifying what is abject, magnifying what is little, exalting what is low, transforming everything in his environment into a nobler, sublimer existence, forthwith comes me Sancho Panza, gross, sensual, and unidea'd, bestriding his ass, and insisting on taking the wretched objects of his rustic surroundings at no higher estimate than that of their intrinsic and repellent worthlessness. Who would not rather live in a world peopled by the lofty if visionary fancies of the Don, than in one modelled after the likings and aspirations of his squire? Or, to revert to our subject, who would not rather be a realist inflated with noble and spiritual, if intangible, ideas, than a narrow-minded nominalist who believed only in the verdict of his senses?

HARRINGTON. Your enthusiasm for idealism is running away with you, Florence. Most people, I suspect, would dislike equally the crazy fancies of the master and the stolid materialism of the servant. It is only indirectly that the relation of realism to nominalism can be said to be subsumed in that of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, though I acknowledge the intimate relation that exists in point of contemporaneousness between the exuberant fancies of chivalry and the fictitious ideas of realists. . . . There is, however, this difference in the comparison of Don Quixote's creations and

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those of idealists, that the former were only mischievous to himself, whereas there is no doubt that overmuch realism, especially combined with and hardened by theological dogma, is productive of very serious injury as an obstruction in the path of mental freedom.

TREVOR. Both realisms—that of knight-errantry and the school-philosophy—were unquestionably mischievous. We must remember that it was the ill influence of the former, according to Cervantes, that first suggested his immortal satire. As to the other, it is indisputable that the effect of nominalism in modern philosophy has been of a distinctly wholesome kind. It gave the death-blow to scholastic metaphysics, and prepared the way for modern science. Ockam, as we shall find, is the direct lineal precursor of Bacon, Descartes, and Locke. . . . Miss Leycester's challenge, therefore, does not quite do justice to the position of Sancho Panza and the nominalists. The higher standpoint of Don Quixote, like that of realists in general, is only purchased at a sacrifice of truth. A roadside inn may not be so magnificent an object of contemplation as an enchanted castle, and a mere class name may not be so interesting as a metaphysical entity invested with the attribute of existence. Still, truth compels us to pronounce that the object in the first case is only an inn, and, in the second, a mere word. . . . I may add that nominalism also has this special significance for our subject, that it denotes a return in a considerable degree to the position occupied by the human mind in Greek Skepticism. It was a recognition—the first in modern philosophy—that all knowledge is dependent on the senses, that what the mind contributes to it is only in the way of receptivity, formal shaping, and classification. It also returned to the Greek position of the conventional nature of language. In a word, nominalism brought the mind back to its original straight course in philosophy after the long and weary detour it had been compelled to take by ecclesiastical Christianity.

MRS. HARRINGTON. It is not an accident, I presume, that makes all nominalists opposers of the Papal power?

HARRINGTON. Certainly not. Nominalism in its very essence is a critical disintegrating influence. Imagine a

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power like Romanism, based on what itself claims to be realities of the most important and stupendous kind, exposed to the vivisection of a faculty which must needs analyze and test those realties without reserve or scruple, and it is clear the relation between them must be polemical. To give them their due, Romanists have not been backward to discern the solvent properties and anti-theological implications of nominalism. Most of Ockam's works, *e.g.* are placed on the Index.

TREVOR. Freedom from ecclesiasticism and its dogmas has not been the only service rendered by nominalism to human speculation and progress. Its greatest service consists in its perpetual protest against the tyranny of words and human language.

Goethe's words—

> Name ist Schall und Rauch,
> Umnebelnd Himmelsgluth—

are true not only of theology and metaphysics, but of every object of human knowledge. The physical scientist is just as fond of conjuring with a few high-sounding self-devised terms as the theologian. Now, nominalism, as taught by Ockam, reveals language as an indispensable but intermediate and obfuscating influence. It represents it as intervening—1st, between man the knower and the object known; 2nd, between man and his fellow-men. As to the first, it is its function to do so, just as that of the eye is to see and the ear to hear, but its final expression differs from sense-impressions in the second point, and also in the fact of its being a self-registering and perpetuating instrument. 'Litera scripta manet,' says the proverb; but all words, whether written or spoken, are charged with implications which either exceed or fall short of their proper limits as symbols of thought; but they are notwithstanding credited with an absolute uniformity of meaning, an unvarying identity of scope which they are far from possessing. To a thoughtful, analytical mind, words say too much or too little according to its special idiosyncrasy. Even to the realist, when his tendencies are mystical, language is insufficient and mis-

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leading. Analyze, *e.g.* the definitions of the Supreme Being contained in the confessions of most Christian Churches, and how ludicrously inadequate do the poor, meagre, wretched terms seem contrasted with the object for which they stand. What thinker has not longed for some Pythagorean *ἀφασία*, reverential speechlessness, devout dumbness in matters of religious philosophy? Instead of which we have a perpetual dinning babble, loud-voiced authoritative pronouncements on the most mysterious objects of faith and thought. The same argument may be applied to much current phraseology in scientific theory. To all this dictatorial verbosity nominalism recommends—1. Analysis of the thing. 2. Economy as to the symbol, both principles being set forth in two Ockamist axioms (I. '*Entia non multiplicanda sunt præter necessitatem.*' II. '*Frustra fit per plura quod fieri potest per pauciora*'). It says in effect: Remember that words are merely words; they symbolize things only by arbitrary convention, and even this accidental signification must be qualified in every case by its actual relation to the true concept or idea in the mind of the speaker. In short, language in final analysis is purely individualistic; the individual expression of audible symbols denoting ideas and feelings, which in their nature, extent, &c. are themselves individual; and which probably differ more or less in every case of the employment of the same terms.

HARRINGTON. Pardon me, Doctor, but your nominalistic fervour is carrying you too far. According to your theory and that of extreme nominalists, language is altogether refused its *raison d'être*. It is no longer a mode of communication between one man and another, the indispensable basis of all social existence and civilization; it is rather an instrument of demarcation. On your principle it is not only true, '*Quot homines tot sententiæ*,' but '*Quot homines tot linguæ*' —an enunciation of extreme individualism which I regard as self-refuting. Happily the excessive analysis needed to isolate every man's language from that of his fellow-men is so rare that we need have no fear of this form of Skepticism obtaining a wide currency.

ARUNDEL. I also object to Dr. Trevor's vilifying the inter-

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mediate function of language, though it is quite in harmony with his intellectual bias. It seems to me puerile to quarrel with conditions which are inevitable to our human existence, 'craving,' according to the old saying, 'better bread than can be made of wheat.' Doubtless language is a medium, occupying in part the same position as our senses, but it is Quixotic and absurd either to complain of its indispensable relation to us, or to doubt that its intercommunication generates infinitely more harmony than dissidence. Because all men's eyes have not the same power, or because objects of sight when analyzed are personal, shall we bid every man commit the self-stultifying act of blinding himself? And even granting that the mental conception I attribute to such common terms as 'man,' 'whiteness,' are not absolutely and in all points like those which my neighbour attributes to the same words, the difference, even if it could be detected, which I submit it cannot, would probably be of the very smallest significance, not affecting appreciably the substantial harmony expressed by our common employment of such common terms. . . . I have called this craving for impossible conditions of knowledge 'Quixotic' designedly, for the moral of Cervantes's great work appears to me useful for all those dissatisfied thinkers, pessimists, nihilists, and Skeptics—the irreconcilables of human thought. Like Don Quixote, these despisers of actualities don their battered armour, mount their Rosinantes, and go forth in quest of the indiscoverable, feigning imaginary Dulcineas, and contending vigorously with the phantasmal creations of their own crazy brains. I wish these relatives of the knight of La Mancha would lay to heart the last chapter of Don Quixote, in which the Don confesses himself disillusionized and freed from all his absurd imaginations. The passage seems to me the most pathetic in the whole book: 'Yo tengo juicio ya libre y claro sin las sombras caliginosas de la ignorancia, que sobre él me pusieron mi amarga y continua leyenda de los detestables libros de caballerías,' is his plaintive comment on the vain pursuits of his life.

MISS LEYCESTER. The chapter and passage you have just alluded to seems to me to have another and very different interpretation. It surely represents the tardy

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discovery and the lament of idealism for the unattainable nature of all its high-wrought and generous desires. It is a wail like that of the Hebrew Skeptic, which so often attends the retrospect of a thinker's life: 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.' For my part, I have no difficulty in conceiving the real moral of Don Quixote as being Skeptical—representing in a satirical and humorous form the same lesson which is taught by other mediæval mythes, possibly among the rest by 'The quest of the Holy Grail,' viz. the search of the human mind for complete, demonstrable, self-satisfying truth. Considered from this standpoint, I know few things in literature more profoundly pathetic than the last chapter of Don Quixote.

TREVOR. With that interpretation of Cervantes's work I quite agree; . . . but as I am now attacked by two such vigorous opponents of extreme nominalism, it is time to cry, 'Ockam to the rescue!'

(Thus saying, Dr. Trevor began his paper.)

Skepticism, being a mode of thought, will necessarily affect language as the instrument and expression of thought. In an early stage of civilization men began to speculate not only on the relation of their subjective feelings and ideas in regard to the external world, but also on the relation between those ideas and the audible signs by which they were expressed to themselves or to others. No doubt the first impulse of a child or an uneducated man is to assume a real existence for every term which denotes an objective entity, even if it is the most abstract of abstractions. 'For every denominative word, nay, for every mental concept, a real thing'[1] is the rough-and-ready rule of the unreflecting on such subjects. Hence the various generalizations, colligations, abstractions which emerge in language, which are necessary concomitants of its growth, and without which knowledge would be impossible, are held to symbolize entities possessing independent existence and reality. It is not until the human mind has advanced so far as to be able to cast a retrospective and analytical glance at its rough-hewn conceptions that it begins to discover the arbitrary and unsatisfactory relation existing between knowledge and its verbal realization and expression. It might therefore be said that men start on their intellectual course by being realists, while it is only in their philo-

[1] Comp. Prantl, *Gesch. der Logik*, i. p. 15. Proverbs expressing this relation are common to most civilized languages, *e.g.*: 'Nomen alicujus est alicui.' 'Alicui rei aliquid est nomen.'

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sophical maturity that they become nominalists. The relation of language to knowledge was a problem that occupied the attention of Greek thinkers at an early date. Among the Eleatics it was a natural result of their keen introspection,[1] while among the Sophists and Rhetoricians it was a product quite as natural of their logomachies. These early inquirers were not long in coming to the conclusion that in its origin language was οὐ φύσει ἀλλὰ νόμῳ, the result of conventional agreement, rather than of primordial law or necessity. The judgment of Sokrates on the point was of the same indeterminate kind as that of the Sophists. Often in his Dialogues of Search he treats words as if they were arbitrary signs of things or ideas, while on the other hand he sometimes expresses an opinion that they possess an independent fitness and appropriateness which remove them from the categories of chance and accident. The general outcome of his Eristic, much of which consists in verbal analysis, is, however, nominalistic. The value of words as of ideas to Sokrates consisted largely in their controversial utility. Indeed, an Eristic must, from the necessity of the case, be more or less a nominalist. The Greek work which comes neares to what we understand as a philosophy of language is the 'Kratylos' of Plato; but like the rest of Plato's writings, it leaves the question of the origin of language undecided. Human speech, we are told, possesses some characteristics which seem to show that it was divinely imparted, while others appear to indicate that it was humanly evolved. Plato is, however, a realist on the question of the independent existence of common terms. Abstractions and generalizations are not mere products of the growth of language: they are names of independent self-existing entities. Indeed, ideas have not only a being of their own, but it is by partaking of their own independent and eternal being that real objects possess their reality. Aristotle also called attention to the same common concepts, but in a different manner. To him they were not realistic notions, but convenient class-names, under which objects of knowledge might be arranged. By his conversion of Platonic ideas to logical categories,[2] Aristotle gave a new aspect to the contrast between realism and nominalism, without, however, committing himself definitely to the latter, his general position being a kind of objective conceptualism.[3] He must also be reckoned to have

[1] Comp. Prantl, i. pp. 11, 12.

[2] Prantl, i. p. 62.

[3] Comp. the Essay of Baumgarten-Crusius, *De vero Scholasticorum Realium et Nominalium discrimine*, &c., *Opuscula Theol.* p. 67, and Kampe, *Die Erkenntniss-Theorie des Aristoteles*, p. 324, and *passim*. See also Hauréau, i. pp. 86, 87.

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given a decided impetus to the growth of nominalism in later Greek philosophy, by his opposition to the extreme idealism of Plato. But the most marked development of nominalism among Greek thinkers is found among the Cynic and Megaric philosophers, the residuary legatees, as they may be called, of the Sokratic Eristic. Antisthenes, the founder of the former sect, seems to have arrived at nominalistic conclusions both as to general knowledge and the relation of names to the conceiving mind on the one hand and to external objects on the other, that have hardly been exceeded in scope even by Ockam or Hobbes. A similar remark, though with some abatement as to the Skeptical employment of the theory, is also applicable to the nominalism of the Stoics.[1] I need not point out, after our discussion on Greek Skepticism, the use which the later Skeptics made of the ample scope for analysis furnished both by words and their assumed relation to things. Pyrrhôn and his successors were fully aware of the arbitrary origin and nature of language. They knew that words represent concepts rather than things, and made full use of the individualism, as well as the infinite variety of verbal significations, which were outcomes of that position. Centuries before Ockam and Hobbes they had seen that genera and species are reducible to individuals. Indeed, the general tendency to particularism, by which I mean the reduction of all common facts and properties to singularities and individual qualities, is common to nominalism and Skepticism. No doubt Skepticism went beyond the extremest nominalism, for the truth which Hobbes, *e.g.* declared to be 'an affection of words, not of things,' is by Skeptics denied altogether; indeed, the ratiocination of the latter on this point is a powerful *à fortiori*; for if truth be eliminated altogether from things, it will not be very safe among their verbal *idola*. Nor was this the only point in which Greek Skeptics went beyond nominalists; for among other niceties in the relation of words to things, they detected the ambiguity arising from the continuity implied in names when the objects they symbolize have altogether changed their nature and qualities, as, *e.g.* the same name applied to Sokrates living and Sokrates dead. In short, there is no position or excessive refinement in the nominalism, whether of Ockam or of Hobbes, that may not be paralleled from the works of Sextos Empeirikos.

When Christianity took by degrees the chief position in the speculation of Europe which had once been occupied by Greek and Roman thought, the general tendencies of her earlier teaching was

[1] Prantl, i. p. 416.

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realistic. Nor could it well be otherwise. Every religion at its first stage of initiatory enthusiasm has but little aptitude for the self-analysis that nominalism implies. Besides which, every spiritual religion, every faith that inculcates the worship of the Unseen, that invests Deity with personal attributes, that deals largely in Pietistic generalizations, must be ontological in its main tendencies; so that ecclesiastical Christianity possessed numerous elements and thought-directions which were distinctly opposed to nominalism. Thus it supplied an additional basis and religious sanction for belief in the real existence of abstractions by its multiplication of correlated supernatural agencies of all kinds. When, *e.g.* it embodied evil into a personal devil, supported by a numerous organization of demons and malignant powers, each gifted with independent existence; when good was similarly attributed to real self-existing agencies in the form of angels and benign spirits; when the operations of nature were held to be caused by supernatural beings—even the movements of the planets in their respective orbits being ascribed to their guardian angels—it was only reasonable that the generalizations and abstractions of language should similarly possess their word-spirits and ideal entities. It is clear that the outcome of all these different universes of incorporeal existences was to generate superstition of the worst kind. Indeed, no small part of the darkness of the dark ages must be attributed to the excessive realism which pervaded all its thoughts, secular as well as religious. Moreover, the realism of ecclesiastical Christianity was further consolidated and developed by the form which some of its chief dogmas assumed at a comparatively early period. The doctrine of the Trinity, which might be termed the 'test-doctrine of realism *v.* nominalism,' early received a Tritheistic form, which, however consonant to extreme realism, could not but invite the attacks of nominalism. The Incarnation, too, forsaking its earlier form as represented by the Logos-doctrine of St. John, and becoming intensely materialized, offered a fair subject for nominalistic analysis. At a later period excessive realism found a further dogmatic *nidus* in the sacraments and the doctrine of a corporeal presence, for which even in the present day nominalism furnishes the best antidote.[1] The generally realistic bias of Christianity in the pre-scholastic ages was common both to Greek and Latin fathers, and manifested itself not only in the

[1] Salabert, in his rare work *Philosophia Nominalium Vindicata*, has pointed out, what is, however, sufficiently obvious, the easy perversion of sacramental doctrine by realists. Comp. Baumgarten-Crusius, *ut supr.* p. 77. The sacramental views of Berengarius were founded on a nominalistic basis.

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dogmatic developments I have just glanced at, but also in other forms. We must ascribe to it the passionate hatred of dialectic which, we noticed in the preceding chapter, characterized the ear'y doctors of the Church; while another of its outcomes was the mysticism which distinguished some of the most venerated names of mediæval Christianity, though the latter has also, as we shall find in Ockam's case, affinities with nominalism and Free-thought.

But although the prevailing tendency of Christianity for the first hundred years of its history was realistic, we must not suppose that nominalism commenced its existence with Roscellin in the eleventh century, as Church historians are in the habit of affirming. In days when heresy was imputed even to a particular logical method it was to be expected that nominalist writings should be carefully suppressed by the dominant 'orthodoxy mania,' as Dr. Prantl calls the theological zeal of Anselm. The disappearance of Roscellin's writings is probably only an illustration of the fate of similar works. But the occasional manifestation of nominalism must be taken as incidental to the growth of mediæval dialectic. After the time of Boethius and the revival of Aristotelian logic, the attention of thinkers was naturally drawn to the true nature of universals, the potent abstractions of genera, species, &c.; and the mental awakening which set in during the ninth and tenth centuries was not likely to allow the realistic interpretations of those terms to remain unanalyzed and unchallenged. Besides the nominalistic proclivities of Erigena glanced at in the preceding essay, the semi-nominalistic views of Raban Maur [1] the great scholastic authority of the ninth century, and the still more developed nominalism of Heiric of Rheims,[2] recent discoveries in mediæval literature prove that the same Skeptical principle had a well-marked existence in the tenth century.[3] Probably further researches among the glosses and marginal notes of mediæval MSS. would result in finding more evidence of a similar kind. But even with that already at our disposal, Dr. Prantl is fully justified in his conclusion [4] that the standpoint of Roscellin was not essentially new, whence it follows that the Free-thought implied in

[1] Hauréau, *Hist. de la Phil. Scol.* (last edition), p. 144; Prantl, ii. p. 38.

[2] Hauréau, *ut supra*, pp. 193, 194; Prantl, ii. p. 41.

[3] See Dr. Barach's interesting little tractate, *Zur Geschichte des Nominalismus vor Roscellin* (Wien 1866), which gives the glosses inscribed by some unknown nominalist of the tenth century, on the margin of a MS. containing the categories of the Pseudo-Augustine.

[4] *Logik*, vol. ii. p. 77, &c. See also, *passim*, the earlier half of the same volume. Comp. Hauréau, vol. i.

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nominalism may be said to have been coeval with, if not a concomitant in the sense of reaction of, the earliest developments of realism. Roscellin, to use a happy expression of Lobkowitz,[1] was 'Nominalium sectæ non author, sed auctor'—'not the father, but the furtherer of the sect of nominalists,' as the words might be freely rendered. But if Roscellin has thus his precursors dating from the commencement of mediæval philosophy, he has also his successors. The remark of John of Salisbury that nominalism expired with its founder must, as historians of philosophy have long acknowledged, be taken with large qualification.[2] Even allowing that the greatest doctors of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were realists, their realism was only the creature of their dogmatic necessities, it afforded the only metaphysical standpoint on which some of the most important doctrines of ecclesiastical Christianity could be theoretically based. Hence the most remarkable even of these were realists in conclusion but nominalists in method and tendency. Hauréau has well observed —what our own investigations in the preceding chapter have served to confirm—that even 'the "Sentences" of Peter Lombard and the "Summa" of Aquinas, the two great manuals of Christian orthodoxy, were composed according to the plan and spirit of nominalism.'[3] Indeed, the intellectual character and tone of thought of the twelfth century was becoming more and more nominalistic in its persistent inquiry, its daring criticism, its insistence on dialectic and reasoned discussion as the sole basis of truth, its regard for mental freedom, its impatience of dictatorial dogma and sacerdotal domination.

William of Ockam may therefore be said to have succeeded to a wealthy heritage of Free-thought, or at least what must have become so to a man of his keen insight and powerful intellectual grasp. Hence it is not so much as an originator, whether of nominalism or of rationalism, or of political and religious liberty, that the name of Ockam is so remarkable, as that he combined in his own personality, consolidated by his intellectual power, imparted a new zest and energy by his indomitable character and spiritual fervency to the various Skeptical impulses and tendencies of the two preceding centuries.

William of Ockam derives his name from his birthplace, Ockam, in Surrey. The year of his birth is uncertain, but may be

[1] Hauréau, i. p. 243.

[2] Comp. De Gerando, *Hist. Comp. des Systèmes de Philosophie*, vol. iv. p. 399.

[3] Vol. i. p. 489.

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conjectured as being somewhere about 1280. While yet young he was received into the order of the Franciscans, and after due preparation was sent by his superiors to Oxford. He is said to have entered Merton College, but in truth nothing certain is known of the early events of his life. A more trustworthy tradition represents him as going from Oxford to Paris, where he came in contact with Duns Scotus, whose lectures he attended. Assuming this to be true, the meeting must have been remarkable, and a repetition of that between William of Champeaux and Abelard. In both cases the realistic teacher was confronted by the nominalist disciple, who was destined to subvert his doctrine and overthow his authority. As Hauréau remarks,[1] Duns Scotus was an extreme realist. 'There is no fiction he did not accept, no abstraction which he did not rank among independent existences, no verbal distinction which he did not take as a sign of reality;' while Ockam's tendencies pointed altogether in an opposite direction. In a short time the keen, independent, rationalizing spirit of the disciple made itself favourably known among a society which always cherished a secret admiration for freedom of thought and boldness of utterance. Ockam was soon in a position to become a lecturer, and in his new office attracted, as Abelard had done, all the eager ingenuous youths of the university round his chair. The prominent position he thus acquired among the teachers of the university, as well as his indomitable spirit and his known dislike of mere traditionalism in every form, pointed him out as a fitting champion of the rights of the king and the Gallican Church against the encroachments of Boniface VIII. His work on the subject—which we shall have to notice more fully when we come to discuss his position as a theologian—is the first of a series of anti-Papal declamations which might almost have emanated from a Protestant controversialist. They completely cut the ground, not only from beneath Roman ecclesiasticism, but from under sacerdotalism of every kind; and leave the principles and authorities which determine human beliefs on those broad grounds of reason and direct obligation where Christ Himself placed them. The antagonism which Ockam commenced against Boniface VIII. was continued with still greater vehemence against his successor, John XXII. By his fulminations against the Minorite orders, their opinions on the subject of poverty, and their conceptions of primitive Christianity, the latter Pontiff had excited the indignation of those influential bodies. Ockam had

[1] See his article on Ockam in the *Nouv. Biog. Gén.*

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been chosen provincial of the Franciscan order in England in 1322. This elevated position, combined with his own Free-thinking proclivities, marked him out as a leader in the controversy with John XXII. He attacked the great adversary of himself and his order in several works which, notwithstanding their scholastic form and wearisome prolixity, are of the greatest importance in determining Ockam's ecclesiastical and so far his dogmatic standpoint. Among the first of these was a small tractate styled 'Epistola Defensoria,'[1] which, according to Hauréau, may stand as one of the earliest vindications of the liberty of the press, and so far may claim to be a precursor of Milton's 'Areopagitica.' But this early assertion of 'Liberty of Prophesying' was not likely to meet the approval of the successor of Boniface VIII. Having received, says Hauréau,[2] 'William's manifesto, he transmitted it to the Bishops of Ferrara and Bologna, charging them to proceed according to canonical routine against the author of that abominable work.' The issue of this investigation, which, according to Fleury, took place in 1323, is not clearly known, but from Ockam's ill fame in the Papal Rescripts and fulminations launched against Louis of Bavaria,[3] we may well conclude that it was unfavourable, and that Ockam thus early acquired the honourable appellation of heretic which clung to him for the remainder of his life. This, however, was only the first of a series of ecclesiastical processes with which John XXII. visited his Free-thinking antagonist. In the next few years we find Ockam implicated with other leaders of the Franciscan order in the crime of complicity with Louis of Bavaria and the antipope which that monarch had set up against John XXII. While this suit was still pending Ockam and his brother Franciscans were taken prisoners, brought to Avignon, and were there kept in confinement until their cause was determined. The date of their captivity is not known, but a Papal rescript, bearing date 1327, complains of the flight of Ockam and his friends, and excommunicates them for this additional defiance of the Pope. We learn from this document that Ockam's writings had then been for a long time before the court appointed to try them, so that it is barely possible that the

[1] Published by Ed. Brown in his *Appendix ad Fasciculum rerum expetendarum et fugiendarum*, p. 436.

[2] *Hist. de la Phil. Scol.* vol. ii. p. 420. It may be necessary to observe that all references to Hauréau's invaluable history on the subject of Ockam are made to the first edition.

[3] See, *passim*, the 'Processes of Pope John XXII. against Louis of Bavaria,' contained in vol. ii. of Martene and Durand, *Nov. Coll.*

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inquiry commenced in 1323 had for some reason never pronounced a definitive judgment. However that may be, Ockam with his two companions contrived to make their escape from Avignon. Leaving the city secretly and by night, they found their way to the port of Aigues Mortes. On their arrival there they were overtaken by the Bishop of Ostia, who had been hastily despatched by the Pope to bring back the absconding heretics. But Ockam and his friends had too much experience of the Pope's disposition to wish to trust themselves in his power. They refused to return to Avignon; not only so, but they openly declared their intention of going over to the Pope's great adversary, Louis of Bavaria. Embarking in a small boat at Aigues Mortes, they were soon taken up by an armed galley which their imperial patron had despatched to meet them.[1] They were conducted to Pisa, where Louis—then engaged in his Italian campaign—received them with great honour, no doubt foreseeing the advantage of such powerful auxiliaries in his contest with John XXII. It was on this or some similar occasion of meeting Louis that Ockam is reported to have made the agreement, 'Defend me with your sword, I will defend you with my pen'—a compact which his numerous anti-Papal writings prove to have been abundantly fulfilled so far as he was concerned. Nor was Louis wanting to his part of the bargain. So far as is known, Ockam, after accompanying him throughout his unfortunate Italian expedition, returned with him to Munich in 1330, where he continued to reside under the protection of his patron for the remainder of his life. Here he wrote, with unimportant exceptions, the whole of his voluminous works: I. On Theology and Church Government; II. On Dialectics; III. On Philosophy. The effect of writings whose general scope consisted in an uncompromising attack on scholasticism and the Papacy was to spread abroad his fame as a bold and free thinker. The titles 'Invincible Doctor' and 'Venerable Founder'—*i.e.* of nominalism—were bestowed on him. Disciples gathered round him, his works were read and commented on by professors in the university of Paris and other European seats of learning. He was the accepted teacher of the new thought which on its religious side resulted in the Protestant Reformation, and on its philosophical found an outcome in the teachings of Descartes, Bacon, and Locke. But the Skeptical nature of Ockam's speculations, both in theology and philosophy,

[1] See the whole narrative in Martene and Durand, *Nov. Coll.* vol. ii. p. 751.

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was too distinctly marked not to draw upon them the continued hostility of the Papacy and its adherents. We find, *e.g.* that in 1339 the university of Paris promulgated a decree [1] pointing out that the outcome of Ockam's nominalism was to destroy all knowledge, and for that reason forbidding the teaching of his philosophy. The decree was renewed the year following (1340), whence it would seem that it had not been very effectual, and that the number and influence of Ockamists in the university were greater than the authorities were aware of. Nor was it only in Paris that Ockam's doctrines were thus early disseminated. As we shall see further on, he had acquired a European reputation for Free-thought and anti-Papal sympathies while hardly more than thirty-five years old. Our knowledge of his life at Munich is unfortunately very scanty. There is little doubt that with his Ghibelline sympathies he entered warmly into the imperialist projects of Louis of Bavaria, and was one of the earliest to pay court to the Antipope whom that monarch set up. Indeed, as Ockam had proved to his full satisfaction that Pope John XXII. was a heretic, and, further, maintained that a heretical Pope was *ipso facto* deposed from his power and dignity, he could have had no difficulty in transferring his allegiance to Nicholas V. during his brief and ill-fated sovereignty. Of the remainder of Ockam's life at Munich nothing seems to be known, with the exception of its abundant literary productiveness. That his social environment was in many respects congenial we may take for granted. Munich had long been the seat of that freer anti-Papal thought which might be styled mediæval Protestantism. The spiritual teachers among the Franciscans, Marsilio of Padua and John of Janduno (both of them being allies, perhaps pupils, of Ockam), had found shelter there.[2] The *genius loci* of

[1] D'Argentré, *Coll. Jud.* vol. i. p. 337.

[2] Marsilio was the greatest of Ockam's allies among the Free-thinking Franciscans of the fourteenth century. He was the author of the celebrated *Defensor Pacis*, a work truly epoch-making in its enlightened conception of human liberty. It utterly undermines the whole sacerdotal and dogma-making power of the Papacy, and in its spirit is more like a literary product of the nineteenth than the fourteenth century. See the work in Goldast, *Monarchia*, vol. ii. pp. 154–308. Comp. also, Neander and Milman's *Church Histories*; Riezler, *Die Literarischen Widersacher der Päpste*, p. 30; Contzen, *Geschichte der Volkswirthschaftlichen Literatur im Mittelalter*, p. 120, &c. It was the opinion of Clement VI., who certainly had every opportunity of knowing the truth, that Marsilio had derived his opinions from Ockam. As the *Defensor Pacis* was probably published before Ockam's open rupture with John XXII., Riezler conjectures that the

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Munich was therefore precisely adapted for the inception of that warfare with dogma which Ockamism implied. Still with his daring, resolute spirit, his restless, vivacious temperament, Ockam seems to have desired a wider if not more congenial field for his activities. Such at least is one inference from a passage which occurs in the prologue to his 'Compendium Errorum Papæ John XXII.'[1] Here he seems to complain that himself, with other Christ-worshippers (Christicolis) had been banished to Patmos (Munich). He then proceeds: 'We are not, however, placed beyond the hope of succour and reward; we trust in the Highest that we shall return with honour to Ephesus (*i.e.* probably Paris). But if God should not grant this, I am certain that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor power, nor height, nor depth, nor tribulations, nor threats, nor promises, nor any other creature can separate us from the love of God, or from the defence of the Christian faith, for which we have learnt to undergo labours and sorrows.' Assuming this to represent Ockam's real feelings, we may affirm with some confidence that his return to the Ephesus of his affections was never accomplished. The most reliable tradition states that he remained at Munich until his death, which it is said took place in 1347.[2] On the other hand, Ockam's enemies appear inclined for obvious reasons to extend his life for some ten or twelve years longer. Wadding, the chronicler of the Minorite orders, relates that after the death of Louis in 1347 he desired reconciliation with the Pope, and that in order to obtain absolution he subscribed in 1349 a form of recantation prescribed for the purpose by Clement VI.[3] In consequence of these important events his death is postponed until 1359, when Wadding says he died at Collimala in Italy. But the sources of this tradition are too questionable, and the powerful motives that might have invented it are too manifest to allow it any basis even of probability. Independently of other and less suspicious testimony, Ockam was by no means the kind of man to submit for any reason to an authority he believed unfounded both in reason and Scripture. Such an act would have

intercourse of the two Free-thinkers must have taken place during their residence at the university of Paris. See his work above mentioned, p. 241, &c.

[1] Goldast, *Mon.* vol. ii. p. 957.

[2] Fabricius, *Bibl. Lat.*; Hauréau, *Nouv. Biog. Gén.*; and, generally, all Protestant historians.

[3] Bulœus, *Hist. Univ. Par.* iv. p. 317. Wadding, ad ann. 1349. D'Argentré, *Coll. Jud.* i. p. 360.

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stultified his life's work. Indeed, the very terms of the recantation Clement VI. is said to have exacted of him[1] sufficiently prove the falsity of the story, while nothing is more certain than that his memory was cherished by his disciples, many of whom were contemporaries, as well as by the early Protestant reformers, as an undaunted and irreconcilable foe of the Papacy.

Turning from Ockam's life to his works, we may observe that the latter is the speculative counterpart of the former. The resistance to dogma and traditionalism, so strongly marked in his career, is also attested by his writings. The stern unbending character of the man, the sweeping nature of his methods, his determination to attain freedom at any cost, his single-hearted devotion to truth, his contempt for the prescriptive claims of antiquity except when consentient with truth and reason, mark his books as well as his life. There is a notable passage in his dialogues,[2] in which he ridicules the dread of novelty, so common among timid minds in all ages, and asserts that there is no inherent virtue in antiquity that entitles it to demand the unqualified assent of humanity. He maintains that novelties when needful or expedient ought to be embraced with the greatest possible readiness. No great enterprise, he justly remarks, was ever accomplished by men who were afraid of novelties, and he points his teaching by demanding what Alexander the Great or ancient Rome would have accomplished, had they been deterred by the novelty of their undertakings. The passage illustrates the daring temper, the mental self-reliance of Ockam's life, and its implication is fully confirmed by his writings. He was just as ready to overturn by argument the fabric of Romish ecclesiasticism as he was to flee from the Papal prison at Avignon; and he was quite as forward in demonstrating that mediæval speculation, philosophical and religious, was based on falsehood, as he was to take the side of Louis of Bavaria, in the interests of human freedom and genuine Christianity.

Before presenting an epitome of Ockam's philosophy and theology, it will be well to glance at the peculiar character of the dialectic which is the common basis both of the one and the other.

The progress which dialectic had made in Europe, and its general effect on theology, we have already considered in connection with Abelard. In the two centuries that intervene between Abelard and Ockam, the further advance of logic had been determined mainly by its contact with Arabic and Byzantine expositors. The impulse thus imparted consisted in the incorporation into Aristotle's

[1] See it in D'Argentré, *ut supra*.

[2] Goldast, ii. p. 737.

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logic and that of his commentators of a subtle introspection, a keen perception of the obscurer processes of human thought, an extreme minuteness of subdivision—in a word, a tendency to reduce dialectic to a negative polemic, an instrument of indefinite and omnipotent analysis. This so-called Byzantine logic, which Dr. Prantl assures us dominated the thinkers of Western Europe for upwards of two centuries, may be said to have attained its climax in the dialectical works of Ockam. No conceivable instrumentality was indeed better fitted to represent and express the Skeptical tendencies of our Free-thinker. Its numerous and complicated subdivisions, its subtle ratiocination, its minute and impalpable distinctions, eminently qualified it for becoming the chosen method of Logomachists and Skeptics. It was a logic that took cognisance only of words, and of these, in the first instance, regarded but as concepts, and admitted their relation to things merely *ex hypothesi*, and by virtue of an arbitrary convention. It was a method that substituted hypothetical for categorical judgments,[1] that distrusted classification and generalization when applied to objects of knowledge, that deliberately reduced human science to single, separable facts or names; a logic, moreover, that discarded in its very definition[2] the outer world, and concerned itself mainly with the subjective creations and opinions of the intellect. The method with which it is most natural to compare it is the Greek Eristic. Many indeed are the points of contact between the logic of Ockam—and the remark might be extended to other systems of mediæval dialectics—and the exercitations of the Greek sophists. Both are modes of disproof, disintegration, and negation, though it should be added that in this particular they have only attained the ultimate development of all logical methods. We cannot, however, be surprised that the historian and patient expositor of logical systems—I mean Dr. Prantl—should manifest some impatience[3] at the infinite quibbling and petty disputatiousness of Ockam's logic. While the issue of his method is doubtless simplicity, the method itself is involved and complicated in the greatest conceivable degree. Of few authors could it be affirmed with as much truth that it is 'difficult to discern the wood for the trees.'

Ockam's teaching commences with his theory of knowledge. In harmony with modern philosophy in general, and English philosophy in particular, he inquires into the sources of knowledge. This he finds generally to be sensation. He quotes as an axiom of philosophy the well-known dictum ascribed to Aristotle, 'Nihil est in intellectu

[1] Comp. Prantl, iii. p. 380. [2] Prantl, *ibid.* p. 334. [3] P. 390.

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quod non prius in sensu;' but some centuries before Leibnitz he also discerns the truth of the latter writer's addition, 'præter intellectum ipsum.' For, as Prantl truly remarks, Ockam does not identify himself completely with a sensualist empirism, but recognises the ideal function of the intellect;[1] indeed, the extent to which he does this appears surprising, if not inconsistent, to those who regard him as a mere nominalist, in the sense of Hobbes.[2] Now, the chief, nay, the only faculty of reliable knowledge, Ockam calls the *vis intuitiva*, what I should paraphrase as the 'immediate faculty,' that which takes direct cognisance of states of consciousness, no matter how produced. Thus in relation to external phenomena the *vis intuitiva* includes the physical sensation as well as the mental conception which realizes and completes it; while in relation to purely mental states it comprises the feelings, acts of memory, volition, &c. which may at any time be deliverances of consciousness; indeed, Ockam would make even the spiritual apperception of the mystic, *e.g.* the beatific vision of the Deity, a function of the *vis intuitiva*.

But besides this, man possesses another faculty, the *vis abstractiva*, or power of abstraction. By means of this the similar qualities, relations, &c. of different objects are combined in a confused manner, and are for convenience' sake employed in language and received into the mind as concepts, *e.g.* whiteness is inferred by the *vis abstractiva* from a certain number of white objects. By the same faculty too these concepts are classified, become parts of the memory, and are assigned their place in the sum of human knowledge in company with other concepts of the same kind. Thus on seeing a man I recognise him by the immediate operation of my eyesight—what Ockam calls the sensitive vision—together with its mental correlative, the *vis intuitiva*; but I am enabled to classify him as an object already known in my memory, or else as an object partaking of characteristics common to other men, by the *vis abstractiva*. In other words, man as a singular object or phenomenon I apprehend by the *vis intuitiva*; but humanity I comprehend indirectly by combining in a single concept or verbal generalization all the characteristics common to the different individual men whom I have known, or of whom I may have heard. In Ockam's philosophy the results respectively of the two faculties

[1] *Logik*, iii. p. 333.

[2] *Sent. Prol.* qu. i.: 'Intellectus noster pro statu isto non tantum cognoscit sensibilia sed etiam in particulari et intuitive cognoscit aliqua intelligibilia quæ nullo modo cadunt sub sensu.' These intelligibles he explains as intellections, volitions, perceptions of pleasure, pain, &c.

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become approximately certitude and uncertainty. With the exercise of the *vis abstractiva* Ockam's Skepticism begins.

There is nothing very remarkable in this division of ideas. To a certain extent the intuitive and abstract faculties had long been differentiated by the metaphysicians of Greece, as well as those of Christian times, while they are counterparts of similar distinctions in the systems of Locke and Descartes. Nor is Ockam alone in making immediateness in relation to consciousness the test of the highest knowledge.[1] Here indeed he is in harmony with Greek Skeptics and mediæval mystics on the one hand, and with most modern psychologists, as, *e.g.* Kant and Herbert Spencer, on the other. But in Ockam's time, and in relation to realists, the distinction of intuitive and abstract ideas, as well as the limitation of knowledge to the former, signified an enormous advance in philosophical simplicity, and in the rejection of spurious metaphysical entities. To the realist sensation was conditioned by the supposed existence of *sensible species*. Intellection was similarly accomplished by means of *intelligible species*. The sight, *e.g.* of a man or any other external object was rendered possible by the simultaneous presentation of its sensible species. The recollection of a man in memory, his representation in idea, was accomplished by the presence to the mind of his intelligible species. The term species being here used as the cause, ground, and condition of individual existence, whether phenomenal or noumenal. It is therefore easy to see what an advance in philosophical thought Ockam's elementary doctrine really implied, how its tendency was to destroy the supersensuous entities which both in philosophy and in common life afforded a basis for superstition, how its direct significance was to make the individual thinker armed with senses and reflection, the sole judge of all objective knowledge. However difficult in minute introspection the problem of cognition, there was not the least need, said Ockam, of these sensuous and intellective species. A plurality, he perhaps satirically remarked, was not to be asserted without necessity. In this philosophical economy—this reduction of superfluities to the bare necessities of human knowledge—consisted the chief value of Ockam's reformation of mediæval philosophy.

Hauréau remarks that in this distinction of intuitive and abstractive faculties is contained Ockam's theory of knowledge. I

[1] *Sent.* ii. qu. xv.: 'Ad cognitionem intuitivam habendam non oportet aliquid ponere præter intellectum et rem cognitam . . . quia frustra fit per plura quod potest fieri per pauciora.'

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would add, that, in order to enable the learner fully to appreciate that distinction, Ockam's theory of language ought also to be borne in mind. He distinguishes between three different stages of names, or rather of their allied concepts. The first is the prelingual state, in which impressions of outward objects exist in the mind as inarticulate, voiceless concepts—unbaptized infants, so to speak. The second stage is when they become or are assigned names—spoken utterances. Their third stage consists of their stereotyped form as written words. The first of these stages constitutes a notable and important feature in Ockam's system. With all his stress on the empirical sources of knowledge, he really seems to have doubted whether the fact of the continuity and permanence of impressions did not necessitate the hypothesis that certain images, *idola*, continued to exist in some unknown manner in the mind. A difficulty of a similar kind was occasioned by the congruity between the external object and the internal conception of it; for how could such a harmony be affirmed unless there existed a subjective image with which the outward object might be compared? Ockam solves this and other difficulties pertaining to the reproduction in the mind and in language of external phenomena, by a process not unlike that of Leibnitz's 'pre-established harmony.' He employs, *i.e.* the Byzantine theory of 'supposition,' by which was meant the hypothetical assumption of one concept or name as equivalent to or identical with another; *e.g.* a generalized concept might be supposited for a particular, as humanity or man for an individual.[1] No doubt Ockam here verges closely on realism. His *idola*, mental images, though only subjective concepts, are at least the ghosts of the dreaded universals.[2] Nor is the *rapprochement* wonderful, since it is the same fact of the persistency in thought and memory of sense-impressions which impel men to realism, that made him adopt his own hypothesis of mental names and undesignated concepts. Ockam might have avoided a

[1] Prantl (*Logik*, ii. 280), who thus defines 'supposition:' 'Die unterstellung (ὑπόθεσις, "suppositio") die annahme eines substantivischen Begriffes anstatt eines anderen, namentlich eines particulareren,' &c. Comp. the definitions and distinctions of Petrus Hispanus, in Prantl, iii. p. 51. It is a noteworthy fact in the relation of language to knowledge that all the terms which connote knowledge imply an *underplacement*, a subordination, of object to the thought or conception. The rationale of this is the recognition, often unconscious, that the nexus which joins man to the object of his thought—the synthesis of subject and object—is in reality hypothetical. To take a simple instance, the word *understand* implies, properly, supposition.

[2] Comp. Prantl, iii. pp. 336–38, with notes.

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conceptualism, which sometimes seems to amount to semi-realism, by the determined adoption of Hobbes's dictum, viz. names signify *only* the mental concepts, *not* the external objects,[1] but he was clearly averse to a theory which completely sundered the thinker from the object of his thought. According to Ockam, the external object—for all science was of singulars—was included in the name being supposited as its verbal equivalent. Such a suppositition or subsumption of the external world under mental impressions or verbal symbols amounted to a reconciliation or even identification of the objective and subjective. By means of the mental *idola* and the habit of the understanding which confirmed them,[2] the man, house, tree, &c. distinguished by the senses, were conceived hypothetically as the same objects existing in the mind. So far as the outer world of phenomena and the corresponding inner universe of noumena were identified in this manner, and formed one single consciousness whole and indivisible,[3] Ockam's theory resembled that of Descartes and other thinkers who have maintained consciousness to be indecomposable. But although he thus conceded certain mental images, '*idola, phantasmata*, quodam fictum,' as he called them, he was very careful to discriminate between them and the ideal generalizations of some partial realists. They did not, he said, exist in the mind as objective, independent entities like the 'intelligible species' of the Scotists, but merely as subjective states, conditions or qualities of the mind itself. With the opinions of realists proper, viz. that ideas do exist *outside* the mind, Ockam's conceptualism had nothing in common.[4]

It is just in these unvocal concepts that Ockam professes to diagnose truth. Maintaining that truth is a relation of propositions, he considers those propositions before they have actually

[1] Hobbes's works, vol. i. p. 17. The distinction—for there is more distinction than similarity—between Ockam and Hobbes may be succinctly defined thus: Ockam was a conceptualist, who distrusted language; Hobbes a pure nominalist, who believed in language. The former found his truth or untruth in the agreement or disagreement of mental propositions; the latter, in the mutual relation of names. Comp. Prantl, iii. p. 340, note 774.

[2] *Sent.* i. dist. ii. qu. iv.: 'Nihil refert ad scientiam realem, an nomini propositionis scitæ sint res extra animam vel tantum sint in anima, *dummodo stent* et *supponant pro ipsis rebus extra*.'

[3] One of Ockam's main distinctions on the subject of the intellect was that between 'the act' and 'the habit of intellection.' The repetition of sensations or mental experiences increased both their vitality and continuity.

[4] Comp. Haurĕau, vol. ii. p. 434.

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become vocal, *i.e.* while they are still inarticulate, voiceless impressions of the mind. The development of language from its primary unvoiced condition of mental concepts he considers a deterioration. However essential for humanity, spoken language, according to Ockam, is obtained by a sacrifice of truth. As he again and again points out, spoken or written words are purely arbitrary signs, not inherently or directly connected with the objects for which they stand. Assigned by convention and common consent, they are removable or modifiable by the same agencies. They cannot, in any case, have the permanence and indestructibility which are marks of truth. On the other hand, mental concepts themselves, *e.g.* the immediate deliverances of consciousness or the direct impress of the external world on the receptive human intellect—are unquestionable, and, in one form or other, permanent. Accordingly, in contradistinction to most thinkers classed as nominalists excepting Locke, Ockam imagines a logical proposition of which the terms are purely mental.[1] These terms he designates by various names, *e.g.* concepts, intentions, likenesses, &c. Why the great nominalist should have propounded a theory difficult of statement, if not of proof, and apparently harmonizing but imperfectly with his tendencies, may not at first sight seem clear. In my opinion Ockam was influenced by a desire of meeting realists on what he saw was the point of departure of their erroneous doctrines, and while admitting the existence of conceptual signs was careful to point out that they had, notwithstanding, no real *independent* existence, whether in the mind or without. Secondly, I regard Ockam's stress on concepts—considered apart from language—as manifesting his profound distrust of words as the signs and vehicles of truth. The pure deliverances of consciousness he held to be infallible, the embodiment of those deliverances in spoken or written speech he esteemed altogether fallacious, the source of all human error and falsehood. So far his theory is both a proof and outcome of his Skepticism.

The general bearing of Ockam's theory of knowledge upon our subject is evident. The sharp line of demarcation it draws between personal conviction—the immediate deliverances of consciousness—on the one hand, and verbal knowledge on the other, is almost a reproduction of the conclusions of Greek Skeptics on the subject.

[1] Comp. Prantl, iii. p. 339 (note 769): 'Quando aliquis profert propositionem vocalem prius format interius propositionem unam mentalem, *quæ nullius idiomatis est*,' &c. So *Sent.* i. lib. ii. qu. 4: 'Propositio in mente *quæ nullius linguæ est*, vere scitur.' See Locke, *Hum. Und.* Bk. iv. ch. 5; and on the other side Condillac, *Art de Penser*, pp. 90, 91.

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And the similarity is further confirmed by his opinion that the verdicts of consciousness in relation to absolute truth are not infallible, for just as the Greek thinkers recognised the imperfection and uncertainty of our sensations, so Ockam affirmed that our sense-impressions are only *hypothetically* veritable representations of external phenomena. In every such act of cognition there is a supposition of the outer world—a process not unlike the spreading of quicksilver on the back of a mirror which imparts its power of reflection. Further evidence of Ockam's Skepticism will meet us as we proceed.

For the same reason that Ockam recognises a superiority in mental impressions compared with spoken or written language, he also finds that of the latter, some names are far more direct and therefore trustworthy than others. Adopting the distinction imported into mediæval logic by Arab expositors—itself an outcome of Skepticism—he divides names into first and second intention. The former being names of things, the latter names of words, or of the relations and qualities of things. All language excepting mental was, we have seen, distrusted by Ockam, but words which were signs of things came nearer to his primary requisite of immediateness as an imperative condition of knowledge than terms created by and serving to express the relations of other words. As an object of knowledge, *e.g.* a man is a more apprehensible fact than 'humanity,' or 'rationality.' A white horse is more conceivable than abstract 'whiteness,' and a given triangle is a more patent object of realization than 'triangularity.' Indeed, this distinction of names corresponded to a certain extent to the difference between the intuitive and abstractive faculties. The immediate apprehension of an object by the former, if expressed in speech, would necessitate the employment of a term signifying that object, and this would be a name of the first intention. And supposing the mind went a stage beyond its primary apprehension, and discriminated and compared qualities, similarities, &c. it would have to employ the abstractive faculty, and would be obliged to mark its operation by the creation and use of suitable terms, all of which would be words of the second intention. This latter class of names gives us the point on which Ockam came into collision with the realists, and generally with the whole fabric of mediæval philosophy. A general Skeptic as to language, Ockam was especially Skeptical as to names of second intention, or to give them their technical appellation—Universals. Now it was just upon these names, and the independent existences they were supposed to signify, that mediæval thought was built. Its general

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tendency had been to reverse the true order of direct and verifiable cognition. Ockam's order was—I. Consciousness—propositions made up of pure mental concepts. II. Direct language—names imposed immediately on things. III. Indirect language—as names of names, abstractions from different objects. Whereas, realism, starting from the *à priori* assumption that every name must have an independent self-existent entity in order to create it, combined with the fact that class-names, and especially 'Universals,' were more comprehensive than names of single objects, made words of second intention of more importance than any other part of knowledge. The extent to which this tendency was carried would appear impossible if it were not so well attested. The realist maintained that we knew a man by recognising his participation of the 'Universal' humanity; indeed, he went still further, and declared that a particular individual, *e.g. this* man was identified by his possession of an abtruse property they called '*Thisness*,' and that Sokrates derived his individual personality from a mysterious attribute denominated 'Sokrateity.' Ockam, like Roscellin and Abelard, ridiculed this multiplication of spiritual entities as equally baseless and needless. These fictions he maintained rather hampered than aided human knowledge. 'When a verbal proposition is truly made of external objects, if two things suffice for its truth, it is superfluous to require a third.'[1] Such a fictitious entity intervenes between the subject knowing, and the object known. The act of cognition alone (actus intelligendi)—the mere juxtaposition of a man endued with senses and reason with the external world—is sufficient as a basis of knowledge without the interposition of such phantoms. It is impossible to deny the justice of Ockam's antagonism, or to withhold our admiration from the perspicacity which recognised, and the determination which followed to its conclusions, the true relation of language to knowledge. With his penetrating intellect, Ockam discerned what is true even in our own day, that language was overweighted with indirect terms and generalizations. Not that he denied their utility as purely verbal expressions, but he recognised their inherent tendency to become substituted for things, and, in point of fact, saw them elevated by realists to an independent self-existence they had no right to claim. He distrusted all these verbal syntheses and abstractions. Believing the maxim, '*Dolus latet in generalibus*,' he analyzed these pretentious universals—'Ghosts of defunct bodies,' as Butler termed them—and found them as unreal as other super-

[1] *Quod.* lib. iv. qu. xix.: 'Quando propositio verificatur pro rebus si duæ res sufficiunt ad ejus veritatem, superfluum est ponere aliam rem.'

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natural apparitions of the same name. In other words, the universal he affirmed to be no more than the individual or particular regarded from a certain intellectual standpoint.

It will help us to realize Ockam's position if we try, however imperfectly, to discard from our language all terms which signify common qualities and relations, and from our minds all notions implying community of properties or existence. To take a single instance, suppose we attempt to divest ourselves of the idea of man or humanity as an abstraction or class name, and characterize, so far as possible, the different units of the human race as isolated persons; predicating nothing in common even of two individuals, except with the addition of a specialty which in reality would differentiate them just as their separate physiognomies might do, we should thus reduce the race to its constituent units, and our knowledge of the race would be limited to the knowledge of those members of it who chanced to be within the limit of our personal acquaintance. From this standpoint we could no longer make general affirmations of any kind, we could no longer say man is mortal, we should be compelled to come to the true basis of all those universal propositions, and confine our knowledge of man's mortality to those instances which we knew either from personal knowledge or trustworthy evidence to be true. By this reduction of universals to singulars Ockam arrives at the sole basis of all demonstrable knowledge, and indicates the starting-point, though without following it up, of inductive science. Here also he is in harmony with Sextos Empeirikos and other Greek Skeptics.[1] These analytic thinkers, with their congeners of modern times, readily discerned the seductiveness of a general term or universal, as a *nidus* for dogma. As in the well-known fable of the bundle of sticks, these parcels of sensation-*residua* and thought-figments derived an adventitious and unreal strength from their mutual connection. All that was needed was to break the bond of union, and reduce the bundle to its single units. No doubt the individualism of this position is extreme. It expressed, though in cumbrous phraseology and with scholastic subtlety, the truth of the old maxim of Protagoras—'Man is the measure of all things.' Ockam himself was clearly aware of its theoretical character, and acknowledged that in practice this certitude of immediate cognition could not be maintained. The process was in complete antagonism to that by which language is

[1] Comp. *e.g.* Sext. Emp. *adv. Math.* book viii. (ed. Fabricius), p. 496, and see Vol. I., Evening IV.

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evolved, and general communicable knowledge advanced. That consisted of classification, colligation, induction, synthesis; while Ockam's method was disintegration and analysis. 'What we know,' he says, 'at first hand, are not classes, groups, and generalizations, but single things.' Truth consists of mental propositions, of which the terms are unvocal concepts, and the moment these, however necessarily, are expressed in language, from that moment uncertainty sets in. Truth, by the intermediate agency of an arbitrarily formed language, becomes indirect and second-hand, the legitimate prey of doubt and Skepticism. Ockam's logical analysis, as I have observed, is common to most of the great thinkers of Europe, whose thought-system is based upon or allied with dialectics. Every true system of logic as a method of thought must start from the primary and inevitable deliverances of consciousness; but Ockam's peculiar method, in which he transcended most of his successors, was his full recognition that indirect knowledge can have only a secondary certitude, that the further we depart from immediate sensation and mental perception the greater our distance from primary demonstrable truth; or, to formulate his position in his own words, 'a more or less perfect cognition depends on greater or less approximation to the object known,' whether to the objective sensation, the subjective intellection, or, in the case of mystical intuition, to God Himself. This rigid analysis, so potent in resolving all compound terms and generalizations to their component elements, is a dialectical chemistry useful, nay, indispensable, to a healthy progress in knowledge at all times, but it was urgently needed in the fourteenth century. Philosophically speaking, it was the commencement of that gradual dissolution which ended in the fall of mediævalism both as a philosophical and as an ecclesiastical system. The aim of mediæval thought, in harmony with the ecclesiastical and political despotisms of the time, was the suppression, if possible the elimination, of the individual. To the realist, the individual—the individual man, *e.g.*—was only a singular and transitory presentation of an universal entity which itself was both real and eternal.[1] An animal of a given species was no more than an isolated example of a reality which was itself unchangeable. The manifestation of a particular quality, *e.g.* a colour, was but a transient or special appearance of the same colour realistically regarded as a self-existent and eternal entity. Individuals

[1] From the realistic theory of the universals Ockam rightly deduced, as a *reductio ad absurdum*, that God could not destroy the individual without annihilating the race. Comp. the notes in Prantl, iii. pp. 347, 350.

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might pass away, the realities they represented were indestructible. Nor was this all: realism partook of the all-inclusive undifferentiated conception of the universe which is the outcome of Pantheism. To the consistent realist the worlds of matter and mind —or rather the latter only, for matter was nothing but the phenomenal presentation of some kinds of spiritual entities—formed a vast indissoluble whole, a very ocean of being, in which individuals and singular objects of all kinds were completely submerged and annihilated. The very nature of things was thus altogether inverted. Abstractions and qualities derived from single objects were elevated to the position of their authors and originators; language, which man had developed and trained for his service, was become his master and tyrant; and the text of Ockam's teaching might have taken the form of a paraphrase of a well-known principle, 'Language was made for man, and not man for language.'

Similarly the Church had long since bent all its energies to the suppression of human individuality, whether in belief or in action. To the Roman hierarchy, man, with his rights and liberties, was no more than the phenomenal figment which he was to realism. The Church was eternal, man was transitory. Dogmas, like the eternal species of the realists, were unchangeable, the individual believer was mutable and mortal. Here again the same inversion of the normal course of things was observable. Christianity, through its Divine Founder, had propounded certain truths conformable to the highest reason of humanity—truths which acquired their greatest sanction because they were clear products of that reason—and the Church, after perverting and unhumanizing them, had established them as tyrants of human reason and the foes of human freedom. Here also Ockam, as we shall see further on, did much towards suggesting how far the dictum might hold good, 'Dogmas were made for man, and not man for dogmas.'

I may add that Ockam's ideas of political liberty were also opposed to the despotic universalism in which individual liberties were merged and lost. The rights of princes were no more unconditional over their subjects than the claims of *à priori* universals were over men's thoughts and ideas. The authority of kings was derived in the first instance from the subjects whom, under God, they were appointed to govern; and the highest form of government, as well as the noblest system of thought, was that which guaranteed most freedom to its subjects. Here also the old principle might be once more applied: Princes were made for subjects, not subjects for princes.

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Hence Ockam's warfare with universals imported far more than is commonly thought. It was an assertion in one particular direction of his general vindication of freedom of thought and intellectual independence. To the oppressed human reason and conscience his persistent recommendation was analyze, individualize. Hence he required the logician and metaphysician to test their overgrown universals and to resolve them into the primary abstractions and names of which they were composed. He suggested to the theologian to employ a similar discriminating process with regard to the powers of the Papacy and the dogmatic claims of the Church. The same process which sufficed for the former operation was equal to the latter; nay, the habit of mind which was formed by the persistent and thorough analysis of universals would almost instinctively betake itself to the examination of dogmas, many of which were formed in a very similar manner. In short, as I have just pointed out, Ockam's antagonism to realistic assumption involved not only philosophical freedom, but also a deliverance from religious dogma, from sacerdotal pretensions, and from political despotism. The emergence from mediæval universalism of the individual, whether as a single object of sensation, a particular mental concept, or as an independent unit in a political or religious community, were all precursory symptoms of Free-thought, and betokened the coming Reformation. Indeed, Protestantism in ultimate implication is only a synonym of individualism, and Hallam has well observed of the warfare between realism and nominalism that 'this metaphysical contention typifies the great religious convulsion' of a later period. He might have included the great secular reformation of modern philosophy as well.

In his warfare against universals Ockam, like a mediæval Darwin, sets himself to discover the 'origin of species,' with analogous results metaphysically to those which Darwin arrived at from a natural-history point of view, so far at least that species, as persistent eternal realities, outside and independent of the human mind, were shown to have no existence. Nothing can be more complete than Ockam's disposal of these fictitious entities, whatever may be said of the involved super-subtle processes by which it is accomplished. He is evidently aware of their Protean character, their numberless disguises, the manifold forms which they assume in mediæval philosophy.

I will not weary you with the different kinds of universals which Ockam discovers in the works of preceding thinkers, especially as some of them are too abstruse and impalpable to be

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sustained by modern philosophical introspection. Let me say briefly that whenever the universal is so connected with external objects that its externality and independence of the mind is thereby asserted or implied, Ockam persistently attacks and destroys it. His own theory is this: 'An universal,' he says,[1] 'is nothing possessing a real objective existence either in the mind or out of the mind, but has only a subjective being in the mind, and is a feigned thing (*quoddam fictum*), possessing such an existence subjectively as an outward object has objectively; and that in this way, because the intellect perceiving anything outside the mind feigns a similar thing in the mind, so that if it possesses a productive power (like an architect conceiving the plan of a house[2]) it might produce externally a similar object.' Hence an universal is not by generation but by abstraction, which is itself a kind of fictitious process. Figments or results of the abstractive faculty have their existence in the mind and not objectively, because in that case they would be true things. There are, therefore, some things which possess only subjective existence, so that their existence consists in their cognition (*ita quod eorum esse est eorum cognosci*).[3] Thus universals, whether outside the mind or *objectively* in the mind, are fictions and unrealities, not the less dangerous because they are evolved from the psychical fact of their existence in the mind as subjective ideas or qualities, and because we can trace the manner of their production. Besides, even if universals were admitted to be true, real, and independent of the thinking faculty, they would still be valueless for purposes of science, because they are so located and conceived as necessarily to transcend discovery and identification. We should then, just as now, be compelled to attain our generalizations by the comparison of individual objects, *i.e.* by the method which afterwards came to

[1] *Sent.* i. dist. ii. qu. viii.; comp. Prantl, p. 357.

[2] 'Artificem excogitare domum antequam producat eam, non est, artificem habere domum in esse objectivo tantum, sed est, ipsum habere artem vel scientiam domus quæ est vere qualitas mentis, et talis scientia "domus" vocatur.'—*Expos. Aur. Periorm. Prœm.*

[3] The resemblance of this language to Berkeley's *Esse = percipi* is obvious, but Ockam limited this mere conceptual existence to abstractions and mental notions, whereas Berkeley extended it to all phenomena. Ockam did not deny, as Berkeley implicitly did, the existence of an external world; he only maintained that our knowledge of external things, as such, must be always indirect, second-hand, and uncertain. He, however, included among his subjective notions, 'quod eorum esse est eorum cognosci,' all dialectical propositions, parts of syllogisms, &c. Comp. Tennemann vol. viii. p. 861.

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be known as induction. No doubt the point of importance in Ockam's theory of mental universals or concepts—as in every system of thought—is the precise method by which the mind comes to conceive the single object, or the class-object which thereby becomes its quality. Were we, however, to ask him how the external object is transformed into a concept, Ockam would reply by *supposition*, in other words, by the same process which creates universals out of singulars, or by which any partly alien quality is subsumed and connotated by and under some other given property. For here, as elsewhere, Ockam is careful to remark that neither in the employment of the intuitive or abstractive faculty is there a necessity of postulating anything except the object and the act of apprehending it (*actus intelligendi*).

Ockam's general conclusions from this standpoint are two :—

I. Our knowledge is not of external things as such.

II. Our knowledge is based only on singular things.

I have already glanced at the first, on which Ockam insists so frequently and so pointedly that we must accept it as the chief feature in his system of thought. We know nothing, he says again and again, of external things as such ; we know only our subjective impressions of them. This must not be taken as a denial of objective phenomena. It merely means that Ockam refused to contemplate them, except as mirrored in his intellect. Like the Greek Skeptics, he recognised the fallibility of all those intermediate agencies which unite the thinker to the thought. Maintaining that mental propositions are composed of concepts,[1] not of things nor of words, he shows how all the rules and terms of logic are based on that assumption. Indeed, if the converse held good and mental propositions consisted of real objective things, numberless absurdities would follow, for of necessity whatever might be predicated of any given object would be held to imply that that object really existed in the mind.[2]

The same dislike to externality and consequent indirectness in conceiving knowledge is also the main cause of Ockam's distrust of all language. Just as he himself regarded the universe as reflected in his own consciousness, Hobbes, in this respect less Skeptical, contemplated it as expressed in human speech. But on this point our Skeptic differed entirely from a thinker generally classed as

[1] *Quod.* lib. iii. qu. v. : 'Dico quod propositio mentalis non componitur ex rebus extra animam sed ex conceptibus.'

[2] *Ibid.* : 'Si subjectum et prædicatum essent res extra animam tunc in ista propositum "canis comedit panem" subjectum vere comederet prædicatum.'

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his successor; and Dr. Prantl points out the curious feature in a traditional nominalist that he regards language as an arbitrary and second-hand evidence of truth.[1] But to Ockam truths expressed in speech reached the mind by the agency of intervening sensations, *e.g.* the eye or the ear. So far indeed their *modus operandi* resembled that of the 'intelligible' and 'sensible species' of the realists; at any rate it was an interposition, and as such was offensive to a thinker whose highest conception of personal certitude was based on the immediateness of the cognition. Ockam allowed that spoken language might enable a man to formulate or communicate mental propositions, and he admits its necessity for this purpose;[2] but this does not affect his opinion that concepts and judgments, expressed in language, are *ipso facto* imperfect. In his own case, he finds human speech to be a weak, vacillating, easily perverted image of his thought, while in the case of others it is quite impossible to ascertain how far a man's words are exactly commensurate with the ideas they are employed to express. Probably, however, we must connect Ockam's Skepticism on the subject of language with his mysticism. Certainly a distrust, more or less profound, of the mere human vehicle by which their supersensuous apperceptions and intuitions are necessarily conveyed is a characteristic of not a few mystics.

II. Ockam's second general conclusion is, that knowledge is concerned only with singulars. This is necessitated by the fact that the outer world is composed of single objects, for, as he observes, 'Everything outside of the mind is in reality singular and in itself numerically one and without any addition.'[3] Nature and the creative power of God know nothing of these collective entities postulated by realists. In the exercise of her productive energy,[4] Nature does not bring forth genera or species, but individuals. Similarly, God does not create 'humanity' nor 'rationality' nor 'visibility,' nor any of these abstractions which men cause to stand for the individual members of their race. God creates man. Realists had concocted a phantasmagorical universe teeming with imaginary beings, like a child's fairy-world. Ockam introduced a disillusionizing process explaining how these wonderful idealities and metaphysical entities came to be invested with real

[1] *Logik*, iii. p. 345.

[2] *Quod.* iii. qu. xi.: 'Propositio vocalis est vera quando ex ejus prolatione auditor est natus concipere et formare *propositionem mentalem veram*.'

[3] *Sent.* i. dist. ii. qu. vi.; comp. Prantl, p. 356, and notes.

[4] Comp. Dr. Loewe's treatise, *Der Kampf zwischen dem Realismus und Nominalismus im Mittelalter*, p. 82.

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existence. He pointed out that the effect, marvellous as it might be deemed, was produced by the magic wand of human language and its usual operation on uncritical or fanciful minds. Hence the universal is only a supposititious extension to a whole class of the quality found to inhere in certain members of it, and this as a conclusion of real demonstrable knowledge no individual is competent to make. Ockam is of course clear-sighted enough to perceive that objective science—that which is necessitated by human needs and shared as the common property of many men, must advance beyond singular facts; but the indirect and hypothetical character of the advance must always be borne in mind. 'All knowledge,' says Ockam,[1] 'starts from individuals. . . . From the senses which take cognisance only of singular things comes memory; from memory comes experience; and through experience is received the universal, which is the basis (metaphysical) of all art and science. Hence just as all our knowledge (individual) has its starting-point from the senses, so all human learning (common) takes its rise from individuals, though no science ought to treat of singulars by their separate signs' (*i.e.* no science as such is concerned with individuals), 'but is of universals *taken for individuals*.' He even allows, probably as a logician, and bearing in mind the exigences of syllogisms, that 'those propositions are better marked and more useful which are composed of universal terms.' But this concession to the needs of objective and conventional knowledge does not destroy its particular character in relation to the individual. Universals are still only the subjective creations of the individual mind, as well as in ultimate analysis its exclusive property. Indeed, an universal regarded as a common verbal proposition could only be communicated by spoken or written language, and would be vitiated by the process. Such

[1] Comp. Prantl, p. 332, note 750. This passage, which has been used as a proof that Ockam recognised the true value of the inductive method (than which, as a mode of demonstrated truth, nothing could be more alien to the spirit of his teaching), receives some illustration by comparison with the following: 'Perfecta cognitio intuitiva est illa de qua dicendum est quod est cognitio experimentalis quæ cognoscit rem esse . . . et ista cognitio est causa propositionis vocalis quæ est principium artis et scientiæ primo metaphysice (*i.e.* subjectively as a mental concept) et secundo posteriorum, id est, est causa quâ assentimus propositioni vocali format stante cognitione intuitiva perfecta' (*i.e.* objectively in language). —*Sent.* ii. qu. xv. It may be added that Ockam's distrust, both of the abstractive function of the human intellect and also of human language, would have proved insuperable obstacles to his recognition of the worth of induction.

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a generalizing word is 'a sign arbitrarily created for the signification of many qualities, whence, as a word is said to be common, so it may be termed universal; but this determination it possesses not by the nature of the thing but merely of the will of those who have given it its name.'[1] Both in its origin, therefore, and in its relation to demonstrable truth an universal is an arbitrary connotation derived from a singular, and conceived by the individual mind as a particular concept; in other words, it is singular in its inception and conception, and whatever plurality it may come to be possessed of is a secondary, indirect, and imperfect attribute, useful as a conventional sign, but not adding anything to it as a conviction of truth. In the same sense of identifying universals with singulars, Ockam conceives that God, as seems demonstrated by the course of nature, takes cognisance not of collections or classes, but only of single objects; and certainly if he denied to the Supreme Intelligence a knowledge of universals as objective independent facts, he could hardly have conceded such a knowledge to man. But while Ockam confines knowledge to singulars, he is perfectly aware that the singulars may be in their mode of presentation either simple or complex. Accordingly he postulates both an apprehensive and a judicative faculty, the former of which takes cognisance both of simple and complex objects of cognition when they are direct, while the latter is concerned only with indirect objects which are always complex.

Summing up Ockam's philosophy, we are now able to determine with sufficient approximation his idea of knowledge or science. He divides cognition into two kinds, correspondently with his division of faculties into intuitive and abstractive. Man knows only what is in immediate and actual contact with his consciousness. Whatever he infers by the intervention of faculties or means other than those of personal consciousness is uncertain. In this large category of dubious cognition he accordingly places not only the knowledge communicated by language, *i.e.* all external evidence, but even his own deliverances of memory,[2] and the operation of his abstractive faculty. With these too he includes the accumulated residua of sensations and states of consciousness, what he terms col-

[1] Comp. Prantl, p. 345, note 782. From this, however, Ockam discriminates another kind of universal, which he calls natural, and which consists of the invariable sign or accompaniment of a physical fact, *e.g.* smoke naturally implies fire, &c.

[2] *Sent.* ii. qu. xv.: 'Cognitio autem intuitiva *imperfecta*, est illa per quam judicamus rem aliquando fuisse, vel non fuisse, et hoc dicitur cognitio recordativa,' &c.

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lectively the *habit* of intelligence, and which he admits forms the basis of persistent knowledge. In short, he distrusts more or less all these faculties, whether his own or those of others, which tend to create, combine, formulate, or communicate general knowledge. An outcome of this position is the discrimination common to all Idealists and Skeptics of the personal from the general knowledge, and the restriction of indubitable certainty to the former. Compared with Greek Skeptics, however, Ockam's Skepticism begins at a later point of the process of knowledge-acquisition. With the former the senses were distrusted in their actual operation. Ockam regards with suspicion the expression of these sensations in language. His certainty, therefore, is entirely conceptual. Another Skeptic might distrust his eyesight when it proclaimed the existence, *e.g.* of a white object. Ockam distrusts the verbal proposition, 'that is a white object,' and for this reason, that there is no inherent or necessary relation between the subject and predicate, in respect of its affirmation by language. Both are conventional terms, and may be altered or interchanged indefinitely by the common consent which originated them. Hence Ockam held the predicate or attribute to be hypothetically subsumed under its subject, just as he regarded the reality of the external phenomenon 'white snow' as postulated in the sensation which affirmed it, with this difference, however, that the former might be questioned, the latter not. A further consequence of Ockam's standpoint is, that the more indirect and comprehensive in relation to the thinking subject, the predicate, the greater is its uncertainty as a demonstrable truth. The most indirect and circuitous of all others is the universal; for what can the individual predicate knowingly in such a case, when his actual experience bears no relation to the extent of the thing predicated? For this reason Ockam maintains the universal to be a predicable belonging to the individual, and points out that there is no essential difference between man as a universal and man as a singular; because no definition could be formulated which would include the one and exclude the other. It need hardly be added that Ockam believes in the relativity of knowledge. We can, he says, have no knowledge of things in themselves, but only of the relation in which they appear to stand to us. Indeed, this doctrine of relativity he carries into other matters besides knowledge, as we shall presently see. A further coincidence between his own thought and that of Greek Skeptics is his conviction that to a perfect knowledge of a thing, when it is complex, the knowledge of *all its causes* is essential,[1] this of course

[1] *Sent.* lib. i. dist. iii. qu. ii. This is a favourite argument with Greek Skeptics when dealing with causation.

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being an impossible requisition for man in his present condition of mortality.

Whatever the influence of Ockam's philosophy on succeeding thinkers, it was probably surpassed both in profundity and directness by the effects of his theological writings. If his conceptualism and Skeptical nominalism prepared the way for Descartes, Bacon, and Locke, his anti-Papal writings were a storehouse of reasoning from which Gerson and Peter d'Ailly on the side of Catholicism, and Luther and Wicliff on that of Protestantism, drew their weapons. But as a theologian no less than as a philosopher Ockam is animated by the same free spirit. Like every great mind, a singular oneness of impulse and similarity of method pervades all his multifarious activities. He approached the question of theology just as he did that of scholastic philosophy. In each case he saw a complicated diversiform dogma-fabric, as gigantic in dimensions as elaborated in detail, exercising a terrorism on humanity, and tending to enslave men's intellectual faculties. In each case he discerned the imperative need of rigid analysis and simplification. The evolution of Roman ecclesiasticism, like that of mediæval philosophy, had reached an excess of superstructural growth which in the interests of humanity it was expedient to examine. The despotism of popes and the tyranny of overgrown dogmas might turn out unworthy of human allegiance equally with the portentous generalizations of realists—the monstrous race of universals. In both cases there was clearly a development from the simple to the complex, from the uniform to the multiform, from the concrete to the abstract. If universals were a bastard supposititious outcome of human thought, starting from a knowledge of singular objects, why might not the Papacy be an equally unworthy development of the simplicity of primitive Christianity? If he (Ockam) could actually trace the former to single objects and concepts, why could he not follow back the latter to a perverted interpretation of the words and life of Christ? This is in reality what Ockam does. To the simplified philosophy which is synonymous with nominalism he adds the simplified Christianity which identifies it with the teaching and authority of Christ Himself. Even the methods and terms which Ockam uses for his philosophy he employs also for his theology. For example, the supposition or hypothetical inclusion by which the concept was subsumed under its verbal sign, and the universal attribute under its particular exemplification, was employed to express the incarnation of the Logos,[1] as well as the participation in the Divine

[1] *Suppositum*, in Latin theology, was the equivalent of *ὑπόστασις* with

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nature by others among the noblest scions of humanity. So also the law of Parcimony, by which Ockam inhibited all realistic interventions between the thinking subject and the object thought, as, *e.g.* intelligible species, &c., he applies to the endless multiplication of Divine agencies and methods, and also to superfluities in civil government and policy.[1] This similarity further extends to the argumentative style, which is common both to his philosophical and theological writings. His 'Commentary on the Sentences,' the 'Quodlibeta,' with a few more of his minor works, are framed on the model of alternative antagonisms which we have already noticed as a characteristic of Abelard's 'Sic et Non,' and which distinguishes all the commentators on Peter Lombard; while his anti-Papal works are constructed in the form of dialogues between master and disciple, or, as in one instance, between a priest and a knight. Thus the difference between the two consists merely in this, that the impersonal ratiocinations of the former are personified in the latter, and are thereby invested with more human interest and vitality. Ockam himself points out, in an appendix to the collection of tracts known as his Dialogues—the most important of his purely theological writings—the advantages of this method.[2] Admitting that he has constituted himself an assertor of contrary propositions, he affirms that this method of controversy is beneficial both for the assailants and the assailed. For the former it served to set forth to the world their objections in a complete form; for the latter it was adapted to exercise their intellect, and give them an opportunity for considering the points at issue in all their bearings. What he professed to give was not definition and true conclusions as much as materials for forming them.[3] His ultimate decisions in the various anti-Papal controversies propounded in this part of his Dialogues he promises in a further treatise, which never appeared. But, sooth to say, a final determination of Ockam's opinions, whether on that or any other topic that he touched, is quite unnecessary. Besides their manifestation by overt acts, Ockam's proclivities are fully attested explicitly, no less than implicitly, in the course of his voluminous writings. No amount of

which it is identified by Ockam himself. See below. But the idea was common to mediæval thinkers—so Aquinas says: 'Persona Filii Dei est suppositum naturæ humanæ.'

[1] Goldast, ii. p. 805: 'Quandocunque unus sufficit ita quod nec consilio nec favore indiget aliorum, non sunt vocandi plures, quia frustra fit per plures quod æque bene potest fieri per unum.'

[2] End of *Opus Nonaginta Dierum*, Goldast, ii. p. 1236.

[3] Comp. the peroration to his *Octo Quæstiones*, Goldast, ii. p. 391.

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two-sided ratiocination—no juxtaposition of divergent standpoints —can for a moment obscure his irrepressible attachment to Christianity as against the Papacy, to mental freedom as against spiritual bondage, and to Rationalism and Skepticism as against Dogma. Although, therefore, the method of the Dialogues, in common with his other writings, must be described as cumbrous and involved to the extremest limits of scholastic subtlety and elaboration, the sympathies of the author, the ultimate issue of his ratiocination, are never doubtful. The purport of Ockam's writings has always been fully recognised by Romanists; hence, notwithstanding what Riezler terms his foresight in adopting the 'yes and no' method,[1] the Church immediately placed his writings on the Index.

Starting from the central point of Ockam's theology, its conception of Christianity, we find it marked by the anti-sacerdotalism, the insistence on spiritual religion, the introduction of reason as an adjunct and corrective of faith which is common to all the foremost intellects of the fourteenth century. Recognising the corruptions of the Papacy, its inordinate greed and ambition, its tyranny over the consciences of men, Ockam with his fellow-thinkers, the leaders of the Minorites, advocated a return to Christ and to the poverty and simplicity of the gospel. Few movements within the bosom of the Church were more pregnant with auspicious augury for its reformation than the rise of the Minorite orders. Notwithstanding some puerilities and super-subtle distinctions, which pertained, however, more to the detailed application of their views of poverty than to the starting-point itself, the movement was distinctly both healthful and rational. It raised the question how far ecclesiastical Christianity had obscured and well-nigh annihilated its Founder—the humble Jesus of Nazareth. It advocated a return to the simplicity of the gospel, and, although by its originators it was not held to imply a polemical relation to the dogmatic development of the Church, it came to signify such a relation to Free-thinkers like Marsilio of Padua and William of Ockam. Indeed, it was inevitable that a primary stress on the life and words of Christ should lead to the conclusion that Romanism had far exceeded the limits of its Founder's prescriptions, not only in temporal power and wealth, but also in dogmatic requirements. The insistence of Ockam and his friends on their direct relation to Christ is a very noteworthy feature of their writings. They style themselves 'Christ-worshippers' (Christicolis), 'defenders and confessors of Christ'—not

[1] Riezler, *ut supra*, p. 244.

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only as a formal profession of Christianity in itself, but in implied antagonism to the perverted Christianity of the Papacy. Another outcome of this new reading of the gospel was a stress on the purely human life of Christ, *i.e.* His life of privation and humility previous to His Passion. Ockam and his friends saw that between this portion of Christ's life and the acts and words ascribed to Him after the resurrection there was a profound distinction, especially in respect to the hierarchical authority conceded to the apostles. They also recognised, what the Church for obvious reasons had overlooked, that it was just in this human life of the Son of man that the importance of Christianity in relation to the practical duties and ethical obligations of Christians mainly consisted.[1] They also drew the inference that the Pope, even granting his title of 'Vicar of Christ,' could claim no greater authority than Christ in His period of humility and self-sacrifice claimed for Himself, and this conclusion completely cut the ground from beneath the Papal assumption of temporal power. On this particular point the 'Spiritual Franciscans,' as they were called, were in thorough harmony with the German mystics. Ockam's 'Church before the Passion'[2] as he termed the first and purest stage of Christianity, was only another mode of expressing what Tauler had denominated 'the poor life of Christ.' Indeed, Ockam's conception of the Christian Church was as superior in freedom and rationality to that of Luther or Calvin as his general culture and sympathies were broader and more humane. To him Christianity is above all things a system of freedom. The common opinion of his co-religionists, which assigned to the Pope his plenary power, he declares to be not only false but heretical, because it is opposed to Holy Scripture, which calls Christianity a law of liberty, whence Christians are by the law of Christ the servants of no mortal master.[3] In a subsequent remarkable

[1] Comp. Ockam, *Disputatio super Potestate*, &c.; Goldast, i. p. 13: 'Audivi a viris sanctis ac devotissimis, duo tempora in Christo distingui, alterum humilitatis, alterum potestatis. Humilitatis usque suam passionem, potestatis post suam resurrectionem quando ipse dixit, *Data est mihi omnis potestas in cælo et in terra.* Petrus autem constitutus est Christi vicarius pro statu humilitatis non pro statu gloriæ et majestatis: non enim factus est Christi vicarius ad ea quæ Christus nunc agit in gloria, sed ad ea imitanda, quæ Christus egit humilis in terra, *quia illa nobis necessaria sunt.*' From this distinction of the humble and glorified states of Christ, Ockam elsewhere draws the inference, 'Christus ante passionem et resurrectionem Divinam Essentiam minime viderit.'—Goldast, ii. p. 740.

[2] Comp. Goldast, ii. 490: 'Omnis Ecclesia *quæ incipit post passionem Christi* potest contra fidem errare.'

[3] Goldast, ii. 777.

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passage he explains himself still further on this point: 'The Christian law is not called the law of liberty because it frees Christians from every kind of servitude, but because it does not oppress them with such bondage as the Jews were oppressed with; hence they are legitimately in subjection to kings and other Christian rulers. But it is called the law of perfect liberty because the Christian religion is burdened with few sacraments and ceremonies by Divine institution, and in it no Christian is made the servant of any mortal, nor is he even in subjection to any man unless in things necessary or useful, whether to himself or to the state.'[1] A natural inference from this position is that submission to the Pope or a needless multiplication of ritual observances is a restoration of that slavery from which Christianity was an emancipation.[2] Further, Christianity, according to Ockam, is in harmony with reason, otherwise it could possess no adequate sanction or ground of appeal for mankind. Not, however, that they are identical or even conterminous; such a proposition would have been altogether repugnant to Ockam's idealism. Revelation may—nay, often will—transcend reason. 'Our faith,' he remarks, 'is above human intellect,' but it must never contradict it in matters within their common scope; when such a conflict arises reason must be assigned the preference. The consentient testimony of reason and Scripture is superior to all precedents,[3] laws, and statutes of every kind. Hence Ockam uses arguments of reason and common-sense just as freely as texts of Scripture in impugning the errors of the Papacy, and evidently does not regard one weapon as preferable to the other. Nor is it only in reference to Christianity as a pledge and instrument of its veracity, but generally as a method of truth-investigation reason is placed before Revelation. In a remarkable passage he enumerates four modes of truth-discovery, which he seems to have placed in what he deemed the order of their importance. They are as follows: (1) reason; (2) Scripture; (3) testimony; (4) Revelation.[4] It is only a legitimate, though in

[1] Goldast, ii. 779.

[2] *Ibid.* 667.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 630; comp. p. 633, and *passim.*

[4] *Ibid.* 497: 'Multa sunt de quibus melius est pie dubitare quam unam partem contradictionis vel aliam temere affirmare: nunquam tamen circa quæcunque talia Catholica omnes Christiani neque pertinaciter errabunt, neque pertinaciter dubitabunt: sed supererunt aliqui in ecclesia, qui circa hujusmodi loco et tempore opportunis quærent cauta sollicitudine veritatem, parati etiam tenere explicite, si eam inveniunt sive per propriam meditationem, sive per occasionem acceptam a scripturis, sive aliis hominibus quibuscunque, sive per divinam revelationem.' The last mode being evidently the supernatural enlightenment of the mystic.

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the fourteenth century it was a bold, conclusion from these premisses, and the virtual supremacy of reason, that the precepts of Christianity are in application to be limited by human necessity or utility. No power, whether sacred or civil, is competent to enact what clearly contravenes human and natural right, nor must any one observe what is evidently unjust.[1] Hence, says our bold precursor of the Reformation, 'for evident utility innovation must be attempted.'[2] Christ never intended, he added, that His precepts should be regarded as rigid, absolute prescriptions, unchangeable under every conceivable variety of circumstance. 'For if, notwithstanding the command of Christ, there is one rule of living in time of peace, another in time of persecution (alluding to Christ's conduct in eating the shew-bread), so also, notwithstanding the command of Christ, there is one rule in case of necessity and utility, another when neither necessity nor utility are concerned.'[3] Hence, as a practical deduction, even if it could be shown that the Pope derived his authority from Christ, that plea would become null and void on grounds of necessity or expediency. For this reason Christians are left quite free in their ecclesiastical organizations, and they might, on sufficient reason shown, elect to be governed by a plurality of high-priests, even though Christ Himself had enjoined their submission to a single one. Ockam pursues this theme of Christian freedom in other directions, and insists that sacraments might be administered with other elements than those enjoined, or might be omitted entirely when the omission was either expedient or necessary.[4] Whatever might be thought of this liberty by sacerdotalists, no rational Christian will find fault with Ockam's maxim in dealing with these subjects—'We must not always cleave to the words even of Christ, but rather to the mind.'[5]

Passing to Ockam's view of the Church, two considerations seem especially involved in it: (1) the supremacy of Christ; (2) the voluntary nature of all submission to authority. Ockam was fully persuaded that the basis of all government consisted in the consent expressed or implied of those governed. It was in this sense of

[1] Goldast, ii. 807.

[2] *Ibid.*: 'Ergo propter evidentem utilitatem est novitas facienda.'

[3] *Ibid.* p. 810. On this point Ockam maintains that the abrogation of positive injunctions, in case of necessity, is an axiom both of human and Divine law.

[4] *Ibid.* 810.

[5] 'Nec est semper inhærendum verbis etiam Christi sed menti.'—Goldast, p. 811.

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'vox populi vox Dei' that he interpreted St. Paul's words, There is no power but of God,' &c. His ideal of a duly elected monarch was Saul, king of Israel, chosen by the popular voice on account of his personal qualifications and his supposed aptitudes for governing. Like other believers in the 'Holy Roman Empire,' Ockam was, however, too strongly convinced of its Divine institution to care to apply to it such subversive principles; but he did not scruple to apply them to the Papacy.[1] Had the Pope been chosen by the consentient voice of Christendom, Ockam would have respected his authority, but lay Catholics, except kings and princes, had no voice in the election of their chief priests. Another principle of his still more repugnant to the current opinion of his age was the inherent indifference of all forms of government. The organization of Churches must, he thinks, like all other modes of constituted authority, excepting perhaps the inviolable 'Holy Roman Empire,' be determined by circumstances of race, country, time, and other accidents, no uniform rule applicable to all cases alike being desirable, or even possible. His distinction between what is outward and material, and what is inward and spiritual, which penetrates to the extremest depths, both of his philosophy and theology, obviated any fear of schism in applying this principle to Church government. For according to Ockam—in this also resembling the German mystics and Reformers—Christ was the sole Head of the Church, not the Pope of Rome, or any other priest or hierarchical potentate. He was careful, too, to distinguish the Church Catholic—the collective body of all spiritual Christians—from the Papacy—the mere supporters of a Romish priest.[2] Chris-

[1] Like all the Free-thinkers of the fourteenth century, Ockam was almost a thoroughgoing Erastian. To him ecclesiastical rule was inherently inferior to secular. He is never tired of asserting precedents for the subordination of the Church to the State, *e.g.* the submission of Christ Himself to the Roman power, Paul's appeal to Cæsar on matters of faith, the appeal of Athanasius to the civil courts against Arius, &c. &c.

[2] Goldast, ii. 909, and *passim*: 'Christianity,' says Ockam, 'is entirely independent of the Pope, otherwise the Pope might alter or make creeds.' He considers this contingency a *reductio ad absurdum*. Nor is Ockam deluded by the plea of the Papal rule being a vicarial or delegated sovereignty. 'Tota congregatio fidelium,' he says, 'non debent uni capiti sub Christo subesse, cum Christus sit caput totius Ecclesiæ.'—Goldast, *ibid.* p. 768. Perhaps the passage that reveals most clearly the intensity of Ockam's feelings on the disparity between the Church Catholic and the Church Papal is the following sentence from his Introduction to his treatise *Compendium Errorum Joannis Papæ*, xxii. (Goldast, *ibid.* p. 958): 'Si quid autem scripsero in præsenti opusculo, quod scripturæ vel doctrinæ sanctorum seu sacrosanctæ Ecclesiæ assertioni repugnet et adversetur, correc-

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tianity implied spiritual union with Christ, and was entirely independent of all Churches, sects, and distinctions of whatever kind. Ockam's conception of the Church—regarded as a formal institution—implies his estimate of the clergy, and the system of sacerdotalism on which Romanism was founded. He not only denied the supremacy of the Pope as an individual, he refused to admit the authoritative basis on which the Roman Church was professedly founded. No Protestant controversialist could treat with greater scorn and freedom the texts usually employed as the scriptural foundation of the 'power of the keys.' He refused to admit that they asserted or even implied a superiority of St. Peter above the other Apostles. As to his successors, it was clear that they were not only fallible but were often heretics, and as such might be deposed by the emperor or a general council. Nor was Ockam more lenient to the clergy. With his strong common-sense combined with his conviction of spiritual Christianity, he quite repudiates the claim of priestly authority based on what is termed Apostolical succession. It is, says Ockam, the moral and spiritual qualities of the individual that constitute his fitness for the priestly office, and neither these nor his intellectual qualifications are affected by his consecration. That the priesthood does not imply immunity from error he has no difficulty in proving. Confining himself to his usual examples of human fallibility, viz. the Popes, he shows by numerous examples from St. Peter to John XXII. that they were by no means exempt, either from crime or from heresy.[1] Nay, the Apostles themselves, even when under the immediate jurisdiction of Christ, were continually gliding into error. He further points out that there is no distinction in the New Testament between bishops and priests, and suggests that the distinction was human; nor can he see anything in the power conferred on the Apostles by Christ which would justify the spiritual and coercive authority arrogated by Rome; the jurisdiction exercised by Christ and transferred to the Apostles being merely moral and fraternal. As to Apostolical succession being a 'note' of the true Church, Ockam maintains that it is apostolic *teaching* that constitutes true Apostolicity.[2]

Ockam's subordination of the Church to the empire, and generally of the ecclesiastical to the lay Christian ruler, is so

tioni præfatæ Ecclesiæ Catholicæ, non Ecclesiæ malignantium, non hæreticorum, non schismaticorum nec eorum fautoribus, me et dicta mea subjicio et expono.'

[1] Goldast, ii. 468; comp. Riesler, *ut supra*, p. 258.

[2] Goldast, p. 494.

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pointed that it is only removed from Erastianism by the inconsistent admission of the spiritual Headship of Christ. The analogy to which he continually recurs is the relation of Christ and His Apostles to the Roman Empire. The reservation made by Christ of His spiritual jurisdiction is, Ockam thinks, removed in the case of His supposed successors the Popes, by the Roman Empire having itself become Christian. Hence the Pope should now be subject to the empire, partly in spiritual, and wholly in temporal, matters. He urges that not only laymen [1] but even women are expressly asserted in the New Testament to be Divinely inspired, and he suggests, though perhaps only as an extreme outcome of his general position, that women might conceivably constitute of themselves the true Church, all living men, clerical as well as lay, being involved in error and heresy.[2] We can after this appreciate Hauréau's designation of the 'Dialogus' as 'a revolutionary pamphlet,' for however doubtful the propriety which terms a work of more than 1,000 folio pages a pamphlet, there can be little question as to the revolutionary character of its contents.

None of Ockam's speculations are so diversiform and self-contradictory as his views on the sacraments, and hence on none have the opinions of commentators been more divided.[3] Without going into detail on a point that belongs only incidentally to our subject, I may say that they appear to me to oscillate uncertainly between the opposite poles of his thought—I mean his naturalism or Skepticism, and his mysticism. Had we some knowledge of the order in which his works were written, we might possibly be able to determine how far this inconsistency assumed the character of an evolution—the development of idealism and Skepticism into unqualified mysticism. In this case the order of Ockam's writings would be: (1) the 'Dialogus;' (2) the 'Quodlibeta;' (3) the 'Commentary on the Sentences;' (4) the tract 'On the Sacrament of

[1] 'Ockam interprets the words of the Baptist, "God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham," as implying the Divine power to construct a Church entirely of laymen.'—Goldast, ii. 498.

[2] Goldast, p. 503. The estimate of the effect of Ockam's reasoning, made by his Papal adversaries, cannot be called exaggerated, *e.g.* speaking of Ockam and Michael de Casena, the Pope's decree affirms 'eo impudentiæ lapsi sunt, ut dicerent omnes clericos et Episcopos Ecclesiæ in hæresi versari posse. Quod in Dialogis Okami multis rationibus inculcatur.'—D'Argentré, *Coll. Jud.* vol. i. p. 297.

[3] Ockam has been credited by different writers with holding Transubstantiation, Consubstantiation, and Zwinglianism. The self-contradictory nature of his views may be seen at a glance by any one who compares his *Quodlibeta*, iv. qu. xxxv. with chap. v. of his *De Sacramento Altaris*.

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the Altar.' Accepting the usual definition of a sacrament, that it is the outward sign of an inward grace, his idealist standpoint and his Skepticism as to all objects outside the mind would of themselves determine his especial stress on the spiritual element.[1] He refuses to believe that sacraments are effective *ex opere operato*, and holds that the physical elements have no inherent virtue of themselves, their use being sanctioned only by the command of Christ.[2] He rationalizes the effect of baptism by making the character impressed by it consist in the consciousness of the baptized of their admission into the family of Christ and their consequent distinction from non-baptized persons.[3] Sometimes, however, he ironically admits a supernatural efficacy on the mere authority of the Church, but the tone of his discussion is rationalistic, and he seems to hint a preference for adult as superior to infant baptism.[4] As to the Holy Communion, Ockam readily allows that Transubstantiation is not to be found in the New Testament, and that it is not consonant with reason.[5] He maintains that the act of consecration does not in any way change the ordinary qualities of the elements as these are perceived by the senses, and in harmony with his philosophy he clearly dislikes the theory which makes an impossible distinction between the essence or substance and the qualities of the bread and wine.[6] What is really present in the sacrament under the form of the symbolical body of Christ is the soul of Christ, and it is of this vitality or spirituality that the worthy recipient is a partaker. His favourite analogy in dealing with this spiritual presence is the truly scholastic one that the intellective soul in the case of a man, *e.g.* is altogether in the whole body and in each part of it.[7] But this subjective presence can only be apprehended subjectively, *i.e.* by the faithful believer. On the other hand, there are passages in which the common doctrine of the Romish Church seems affirmed, especially in his work 'On the Sacrament of the Altar,'[8] but these are accompanied by some qualification, as, *e.g.* a declaration that he intends to defend the ordinary teaching of the Church as such,[9] or else by an ironical suggestion that the Church has prob-

[1] *Sent.* lib. iv. qu. i.
[2] *Ibid.*; comp. Goldast, ii. p. 810.
[3] *Sent.* iv. qu. ii.
[4] *Ibid.* qu. iii.; comp. on this point Rettberg's article, 'Occam und Luther,' in *Studien und Kritiken* for 1839.
[5] *Quod.* iv. qu. xxxiv.; *De Sac. Alt.* cap. v.
[6] *Quod.* iv. qu. xxxv.
[7] *Sent.* iv. qu. iv.; *De Sac. Alt.* cap. iv.
[8] Comp. *e.g.* cap. i.
[9] *De Sac. Alt.* Prologus.

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ably received it as a Divine revelation,[1] or that it is a purely theological dogma, and as such must be received by faith,[2] or that it possesses the religious advantage of enhancing the Divine omnipotence.[3] It is difficult to determine, therefore, what Ockam's precise views of the matter really were. For while on the one hand the ordinary theory of the Romanist conflicted with his nominalism in that it propounded a reality external to the mind, and that too by the vitiated source of the words of a priest,[4] on the other hand there was more than one element in his mental formation which would have inclined him to accept at least a modified transubstantiation. First, there was his logical theory of supposition by which one essence or quality might be hypothetically assigned at will to another. Next, there was his doctrine of Twofold Truth, which differentiated completely the processes and conclusions of theology from those of science; and last of all, there was his undoubted mysticism. On either or all of these grounds Transubstantiation might have been accepted by him as a dogma and under protest, though it must be admitted that the doctrine in its extreme form contravened the most powerful tendencies of his intellect.

Ockam's virtual repudiation of Romanism as a source or guarantee of truth has induced some Protestant writers to lay undue stress on his opinions with regard to Holy Scripture. No doubt he was quite persuaded of the superiority of the Bible as a *regula fidei* to the *ipse dixits* of popes and general councils,[5] but, for all that, his instincts were too free to allow him to lapse into the mere bibliolatry and literalism of the German Reformers. Thus he allows that from one point of view the Bible is inferior to the voice of the whole spiritual community [6]—the Church Catholic as distinguished from Roman—just as the part is inferior to the whole. The distrust of human language too, which forms such a prominent feature in his philosophy, comes here into play. He points out the ease with which the language of the Bible may be perverted,[7] and the extraordinary doctrines which have been

[1] *Quod.* iv. qu. xxxv. On the ironical character of Ockam's professedly *coerced belief* in the extreme dogmas of Romanism, comp. Rettberg, *ut supra*, p. 77, and see Baur, *Lehre v. d. Dreieinigkeit*, ii. p. 879.

[2] *De Sac. Alt.* cap. i.

[3] *Ibid.* cap. v. This merit is also so stated as to be indisputably a sarcasm.

[4] Comp. *Quod.* ii. qu. xix. where the mental proposition, the actual intention of the priest, is contrasted with his words.

[5] Goldast, ii. p. 410, &c.

[6] *Dialogus*, chap. iv.; Goldast, ii. p. 402.

[7] Goldast, ii. pp. 639, 640.

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evolved from it. To the actual utterances of Christ as the sole Head of the Church he attributes a greater authority than to other parts of the Bible, but here also he recognises the need of discrimination—the superiority of spirit over letter [1]—and asserts that we must pay more heed to the mind than to the words of Christ. Nor does Ockam see any distinction in kind between truths enunciated in the Bible and those expressed by other writers, whether sacred or profane. He is inclined to accept Augustine's idea, that all truth is inherently Divine and *ipso facto* Christian,[2] just as the definition of heresy which harmonizes best with his utterances respecting it is conscious falsehood. In a word, Ockam's *ultima ratio* as a standard of Divine truth is Holy Writ, especially the words of Christ, combined with right reason—what would be termed in the present day the verifying faculty. We shall find further on that the latter power in Ockam's case seems to pass into the subjective certainty of the mystic. Indeed, the standpoint of mysticism is of itself inconsistent with undue reverence for purely external or verbal revelation of any kind.

No portion of Ockam's free-speculation has provoked so much distrust as his treatment of theological dogmas. Here his philosophical eccentricity becomes actual heresy, and his Skepticism as to realistic abstractions is extended to the primary truths of Christianity. Not that Ockam, albeit a believer in double-truth, was always conscious of distinction when he passed from the subject-matter of philosophy to that of theology; for to most thinkers of his time, philosophy and theology were but different aspects of the same truth. Much of the freedom of discussion we have already noticed as characteristic of the Schoolmen must be ascribed to this conviction. Thus the warfare against universals was in reality a polemic against metaphysical conceptions, and necessarily included all religious truths of a metaphysical or abstract kind. Ockam carries this freedom of discussion to a greater extent than any other Schoolman; and the liberty which, as we saw, Erigena, Abelard, and Aquinas permitted themselves in theological controversy, develops in his case into almost absolute licence.[3] Let

[1] Goldast, ii. p. 739. For this purpose he quotes Jerome against Marcion: 'Non in verbis Scripturarum est Evangelium sed in sensu, non in superficie sed in medulla, non in sermonum foliis sed in radice rationis.'

[2] *Ibid.* p. 840: 'Et ideo Scripturam non est necesse tanquam veram simpliciter confiteri nisi possit aperte probari quod est consona Scripturis canonicis, vel rationi evidenti naturali.'

[3] Comp. on Ockam's Skepticism, Jourdain's *Philosophie de St. Thomas d'Aquin*, ii. p. 194, &c.

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us take, *e.g.* his ratiocination on the first article of the Christian faith. From the standpoint of human reason he seems inclined to treat God as an unauthenticated 'universal'—a convergence of human abstractions—a fictitious entity evolved by realists from their imaginations, and to which nothing outside the mind actually corresponds. He shows that all the reasons commonly accepted as proving the Divine existence are, when duly tested, utterly abortive. Not even Kant himself destroyed with greater ruthlessness and determination the ordinary *à priori* and *à posteriori* arguments for the Being of God and His attributes. Our knowledge of God, says Ockam, is generated by analogous processes to those employed by realists in creating their universals. We conceive of Him, *e.g.* as a Person from the experience we possess of personality or individuality in ourselves or in other men. We ascribe to Him certain attributes which are originated by our consciousness of similar qualities in men, and which on account of their excellence we judge befitting to the Deity. The Divine volition, *e.g.* is a universal of which the root-thought is the consciousness of will within ourselves, just as ordinary universals are produced from singular concepts or things. Ockam propounds the question whether it can be proved by natural reason that there is only one God. This he is compelled to answer in the negative. There is nothing, he thinks, either in the human mind or in the constitution of nature to demonstrate the truth of monotheism. The old argument of Aristotle, of a first cause or mover of the universe being a necessary postulate of the reason, he rejects.[1] We possess at least no valid means of verifying such an assumption. An infinite succession of causes is not, in his judgment, an inconceivable supposition, and the limitation by theologians of the Divine energy or equivalent motive agencies to a specific portion of the infinite past he thinks unwarranted.[2] Nor again is there any reason derivable from

[1] *Quod.* ii. 1; *Centil.* Con. i.

[2] *Quod.* ii. qu. ii.; *Centil.* i. In pure metaphysics it is difficult to see why an infinite succession of energizing causes should be an impossible conception. The idea stands on precisely the same basis as every other species of infinitude, *e.g.* space, time, number, &c. Ockam illustrates it by the successive generations of mankind, which we have no difficulty in conceiving as eternal, whether in the past, or future, or both. There was, however, by no means a consensus of belief on the point even among nominalists (comp. Baur, *Dreieinigkeit*, vol. ii. p. 874). Ockam more than once assails Aristotle's position of the absolute necessity of a first cause: at the same time he does admit, as a matter of convenience, and as a peremptory assertion of faith, that it is better to interpose some limit to the infinite regress. Comp. *Sent.* i. dist. ii. qu. x.: 'Quamvis non est status

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nature or the laws of the human mind why the First Cause should be one, for a multiplicity of Divine agents does not involve any incongruity or impossibility, because they may agree to work in harmony.[1] Indeed, he affirms that, on the hypothesis of more worlds than one, polytheism would be a more probable theory than monotheism. One great reason why the latter—assuming this to be the only universe—is the preferable theory is, that one supreme cause is sufficient, for 'beings should not be multiplied without necessity;'—precisely the reason which he assigns for preferring in politics the rule of the one to that of the many. Our human ignorance of the being of God naturally extends to His attributes. These also are mere inferences from our experience of nature and humanity. We discriminate and name them as we deem most consonant to the dignity and perfection of the Supreme Being; but both our discrimination and nomenclature are in truth perfectly arbitrary. We are unable to abstract and reason on one particular attribute without including in the process all the Divine attributes. Thus the Divine wisdom and the Divine omnipotence are spoken of God simply of the same thing, for what we choose to term the Divine wisdom cannot be known except by the process by which we learn the Divine omnipotence.[2] None of these theistic attributes are we able to know otherwise than as concepts of our own. Neither the oneness of God, nor His priority, nor His infinite power, nor His goodness, nor His Divine perfection, are we able to apprehend in themselves; and these concepts are not truly God, but ideas which we employ in propositions, whether mental or vocal, for God. We are, therefore, concludes our Skeptic, utterly ignorant of the nature, the existence, and the attributes of the Supreme Being. Not only are the *à priori* proofs of these entities found wanting, but the *à posteriori* as well. Regarded as a rational being, as an earthly pilgrim (*viator*), the only knowledge man can have of God is negative. We shall presently see how in Ockam's opinion that negative may haply become positive knowledge. But though Ockam objects to the ordinary process of theologians of assimilating the Divine nature to what they observe of the attributes of man, he is himself occasionally guilty of employing the

in aliquo determinato ordine sicut in intellectionibus et volitionibus tamen in toto ordine entium oportet ponere statum, quia aliter ut probatum est esset infinitas in actu.' He also admits that an infinite succession of preserving, *sustaining agencies* is inconceivable. See Tennemann, *Gesch.* viii. p. 877.

[1] *Cent.* Con. ii.; *Sent.* i. dist. ii. qu. x.

[2] *Sent.* i. dist. i. qu. v.

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same method. He affirms, for instance, that God knows all objects singly, in other words, in the same way that he asserts man knows them; the main difference between the Divine cognition and human knowledge being, that God knows external objects before perception, man only after perception.[1] Such inconsistencies, however, are not rare in Ockam's works. But we have not yet exhausted Ockam's Free-thought in dealing with Deity. Assuming that we cannot know either the being (*esse*) or the nature (*quiddítas*) of God, may we take the mere fact of His existence for granted, may we regard Him as mere Being (*Ens*)? This Ockam not only allows but advocates. We may predicate being of God, but this selfsame attribute may be predicated universally of everything that exists: hence there is no distinction so far between God and the meanest reptile that crawls on the earth, and the highest attribute of the Creator is shared by the lowest of His creatures.[2] We have here, I may note in passing, a complete inversion of the process employed by Pantheists, who, starting from the same common idea of Ens, ascend to God as the single entity who sums up and comprehends the universe, and the very term which Parmenides and Plato employed as the highest they could confer on the Supreme Being, became, in the nominalistic analysis of Ockam, His lowest common attribute or denomination. Ockam discusses the second and third Persons of the Trinity with the same freedom as he does the first. Thus, the qualities of the Father being in theory identical with those of the Son, he considers it foolish to affirm in terms that the power of begetting pertaining to the Father cannot also be attributed to the Son. He speculates—in order to get rid of this dilemma—on a Divine attribute not generally mentioned in modern text-books of theology, but eminently characteristic of patristic and scholastic theorizing, viz. the innatability, the incapacity of being born, of the first Person of the Trinity. To the proposition 'God is man,' nakedly expressed, Ockam yields a grudging half-ironical assent, and he in more than one place deduces from it a number of *reductiones ad absurdum*. It is to be observed that in the spiritual apperception of the Divine essence pertaining to the mystic—Ockam's ideal condition of certitude and knowledge—the affirmation of the Incarnation would be impossible. Similarly, the nature and procession of the Holy Ghost, the question how far He is a person, how far an attribute, His distinction from the faculty of love and

[1] Comp. Hauréau, *Hist.* ii. p. 449.

[2] *Quod.* v. qu. xiv.; comp. Rousselot, *Études*, iii. p. 251.

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other collateral questions suggested by the dogmatic teaching of Romanism, are so many problems into which Ockam endeavours to insinuate the thin wedge of his subtle dialectic. The general outcome of his ratiocination on the Deity, as presented in the theology of the Church, is human ignorance—the necessary suspense of the reason. All articles of faith, he maintains, are indemonstrable.[1] The supreme proof of this thesis is the doctrine of the Trinity, but he extends his ratiocination to the whole region of theological metaphysics. These dogmas cannot be known by experience or by any of the ordinary procedures of the human intellect. They are purely objects of faith. Their knowledge is negative rather than positive, and their highest legitimate attainment in human conviction is not certitude but probability.

The argumentation which Ockam applies to Deity he also finds available to other metaphysical creations of theologians, *e.g.* the nature and qualities of the soul. The old formal distinctions, extending back to the time of Aristotle, between a sensitive, vegetative, and intellective soul, he diminishes by identifying the two former. Here again he manifests the economical tendency that abolished the intelligible species, and the rest of the transcendental furniture with which realism had stocked the spiritual faculty of man. As to the intellective soul, Ockam asserts that all we can know of it are merely our internal perceptions of its operations. Judging by these we cannot affirm demonstratively, nor ascertain experimentally, that it is as theologians assert, immaterial, incorruptible, and indivisible. 'We know by experience,' he says, 'that we understand, and wish and dislike, and have similar operations within us, but we do not know experimentally that these result from an immaterial and incorruptible soul, and every reason assumed to prove this assumes something doubtful.'[2] Whatever we may think of Ockam's method or its results, it is impossible to dispute its consistency. He clearly sees that all metaphysical concepts have a similar origin, and that realism and ecclesiastical theology are, if not identical, at least twin sisters, children of the same parents, and precisely similar both in bodily conformation and mental qualities. The Church had long foreseen, as we know, that nominalistic analysis—the reduction of metaphysical entities to their physical antecedents—was just as destructive to her own dogmas as to those of realism, and Ockam's procedure must be held to justify her forecast.

The most extravagant of Ockam's Free-thinking speculations

[1] *Quod.* ii. qu. iii. [2] *Ibid.* i. qu. x.

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occur in his 'Quodlibeta' and 'Centilogium.' Indeed, the latter work may be described as a collection of theological paralogisms logically deducible from the ordinary axioms and dogmas of the Church. Employing the process of supposition—the synthesis already mentioned of the subject and object, the Divine and human, the visible and invisible, the known and the unknown—an operation which Ockam identifies with the hypostatical union of God and man, he deduces all manner of incongruities and absurdities from the accredited beliefs of the Church. Thus he shows that there is no Divine attribute which is not liable to qualifications and contradictions, induced by its origin as a supposititious extension to the Supreme Being of a human virtue. There is no contradiction, he says, in supposing that as God took in Christ the nature of man, He might not take the nature of an inferior creature, as that of an ass, or a stone, or wood,[1] a deduction which shows how little Ockam—and the same remark is true of mediæval writers generally—was embarrassed in his speculations by excessive reverence for dogma. From the same doctrine of the Incarnation other strange deductions are made, *e.g.* that the Father begat Himself, that He died on the cross, that He rose from the dead, &c.[2] Similarly the dogma of Transubstantiation, notwithstanding his partial acceptance of it, is shown to be surcharged with contradictory implications.[3] Other conclusions to which he arrives, at least which he regards as fair topics of discussion, are—that substances may be derived from non-substantial things; that God has two wills, two intellects, two kinds of knowledge; that God the Father and the Holy Ghost may be sons of the Blessed Virgin;[4] that God might have existed before eternity; that humanity might have existed before man's creation, &c. These examples are sufficient to show the character of the 'Centilogium,' and to explain its general acceptance as the extreme outcome of Ockam's Skepticism. The motive of this curious production is not very clear. I should be inclined to assign it—(1) to the exuberant wantonness of Free-thought which is common to all Skeptics; (2) to the unlimited dialectic which Ockam shares with his brother Schoolmen, and a desire to manifest the potent qualities of the principle of supposition; (3) it may be regarded as a propædeutic to his own mysticism—a suggestion that, reason being impotent and dogmas self-refuting, recourse must be had to the agencies of spiritual intuition, infused faith, and the beatific vision of the Deity. The history of Skepticism affords

[1] *Cent.* Con. vii.
[2] *Ibid.* Con. viii.
[3] *Ibid.* Cons. xx.–xxxiv.
[4] Cons. viii. and ix.

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many similar instances of a reaction from doubt to mysticism; and in most such cases a morbid delight in trampling down reason, and in exaggerating its self-destructive properties, is a common feature of the movement.

But before remarking on Ockam's mysticism as the ideal and constructive force of his mental formation, we must pursue the account of his Skepticism one stage further. He professed fully and unreservedly the doctrine of 'double-truth' generally held by the foremost thinkers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. He seems to have believed that human nature has an innate proclivity to dissidence.[1] We might attribute such a conviction to his own introspection, and suggest that he had learnt human nature 'at home,' were it not for the widespread Skepticism of his time. The divergent elements and standpoints constituting opposing phases of truth which we noticed in the preceding chapter were still in operation in Ockam's time, and the distinctions between Aristotle and Church dogma, or between philosophy and theology, was one which he not only allowed but insisted on. He enforced the differentiation in a variety of ways, so as to secure the greatest possible latitude of thought. Thus, speaking of singular things and their relation to universals, he says that nothing is at the same time both one and many according to philosophers, though according to theologians (*i.e.* in reference to the Trinity) it may be granted. So also, discussing in a remarkable chapter of the 'Dialogus' the conduct of some archbishop who had interdicted certain teachings, Ockam maintains that 'assertions chiefly physical which do not pertain to theology are by no man to be solemnly condemned or interdicted, because in such matters (*i.e.* of secular learning) every man should be free, and at liberty to say what he pleases.'[2] He also allows that there may be a dissonance between Scripture and reason, though he is not always consistent as to the mode of its solution or reconciliation; for while he mostly allows that reason may on sufficient cause shown override Scripture, he occasionally maintains that it is in Scripture utterances alone that contradictions are permissible.[3] But like all genuine Free-thinkers, Ockam was persuaded of the utility of antagonistic reasoning as the best method of ascertaining truth. He expressly defends the free discussion of his 'Dialogus,' as well as his general abstention

[1] 'Cum ergo nostra natura humana sit prona ad dissentiendum.'—Goldast, ii. p. 949.

[2] Goldast, ii. p. 427.

[3] *Sent.* i. dist. i. qu. v.: 'Contradictoria nunquam concedi de eodem nisi habeantur in Scriptura Sacra vel necessario inferantur ex ea.'

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from a positive decision on the points at issue, on the ground of its advantages to the reader. Ockam, in a word, does not profess in those writings to affirm dogmatically what he holds to be true, so much as to afford others materials, and perhaps I should add suggestions, for forming their own judgments; and the same rule holds good of all his works. He thus shares the confidence of Sokrates and all genuine truth-seekers in the ultimate supremacy of truth, as well as their conviction of personal obligation on the part of every man in its discovery. Nor is this trait of Ockam's mind confined to incidental remarks, or to be inferred only from his dualistic method of argumentation; he is not afraid openly to avouch the advantages of juxtaposited contradictions as the readiest road to demonstration. In harmony with this conviction, his ordinary language is based upon his consciousness of the disparity between theology and philosophy; for he perpetually discriminates between his ratiocination as being sometimes that of a logician, while at other times he reasons as a theologian. He also allows that amount of double-truth which might be involved in the Romanist distinction between esoteric and exoteric teaching. But with all his dualism, Ockam is never forgetful of his idealistic standpoint. Reservation must be made of the indivisibility of consciousness. Propositions are either mental or vocal. In the latter case double-truth may be allowed, but not in the former. Real contradictories, *i.e.* of different terms or parts of the same concept, are impossible, for this would imply a disruption of consciousness.[1]

Further illustration of the same feature of Ockam's intellect is found in his treatment of heresy. Not the least noteworthy circumstance in his writings is that, although himself labouring under the imputation of heterodoxy, and being for the greater part of his life under the Papal ban, he should have written so much and apparently so seriously of heresy. But his Free-thought discloses itself under the seeming orthodoxy of his animadversions, just as it does under the dialectical methods of scholastic philosophy. His treatment of the question is so unecclesiastical and judicial, so broad and comprehensive, so generous and enlightened, as to deserve the honour accorded it of a place in the Index. Indeed, his definitions of heresy are so lax, the conditions he postulates as necessary to its blameworthiness are so many, the excuses alleged for most of its manifestations are so various, his reluctance to give any tribunal a coercive control over human speculation is so strongly marked,

[1] *Sent.* i. dist. i. qu. v.: 'Non est concedendum aliquid vere affirmari de aliqua re, et vere negari ab alia re quæ tamen sunt una res numero.'

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that probably no heretic ever existed who would not willingly submit his supposed aberrations to a court animated by Ockam's principles, and willingly abide the issue. The root-thought of his discussion—his ruling idea of heresy—tends to define it not as a contradiction of ecclesiastical dogma as such, nor even a contravention of the assertions of Holy Writ, so much as a conscious enunciation of what is false—a wilful and arrogant contradiction of clear, indisputable, universally received truth.[1] Thus in Ockam's nomenclature a heretic is a liar, and especially a liar animated by base and selfish motives. That this is the outcome of his heresy-discussion you will see by a summary of his chief distinctions and definitions on the subject. First he distinguishes between implicit and explicit faith, or the unconscious possession and overt expression of Christian verities.[2] Of the former or non-Christian Christianity, his example is the centurion Cornelius, who, though a heathen, stood high in the Divine esteem on account of his piety and virtue. He also adduces, on the same point, Christ's ignoring the sectarian distinctions of the Jews. Another distinguishing mark of a similar kind he makes between partial and complete Christianity, maintaining that error on one article of faith does not involve heresy, provided the supposed heretic be persuaded of the truth or superiority of Christianity as a whole.[3] He points out that many kinds of heresies, *e.g.* that caused by ignorance, are obviously pardonable, and he is himself too much a Skeptic not to acknowledge that the fallibility pertaining to all men may easily assume error where none exists– or, as he puts it, 'Error before men may not be error in the sight of God.'[4] On the same ground of compassionating human ignorance, he propounds the remarkable rule that the heretic-hunter who in a doubtful case succeeds in convicting another of heresy is himself guilty of the same offence,[5] apparently because he develops and matures what might have been partial or unconscious error. Ockam's Skepticism on language here also finds play, for he holds that all incriminated words are to be interpreted, 'ad intentionem loquentis,' according to the meaning

[1] Goldast, ii. p. 430: 'Nam veritas explicite approbata, et in veritate Catholica fundata, pro Catholico debet haberi, ergo et falsitas contraria debet hæretica judicari.' Comp. *ibid.* p. 419: 'Non potest Summus Pontifex, nec etiam tota Ecclesia Dei de assertione non vera facere veram, nec de assertione non falsa facere falsam.' The distinction between the Roman and the Catholic Church is a main point in all Ockam's ecclesiastical writings. Thus the dictum 'Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus,' as applied to the Church of Rome, is clearly false. Comp. Goldast, p. 491.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 447. [3] *Ibid.* p. 447. [4] *Ibid.* p. 445.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 461; comp. also p. 641.

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placed on them by the speaker.[1] This mental intention is indeed a primary point in his estimate of error, for, as he remarks more than once, 'No man can be convicted as a liar who intends to tell the truth;'[2] a generous, even if obvious, ruling which would serve to exonerate every sincere heretic that ever lived. With a similarly clear sense of justice and humanity, he pronounces all truth-seekers to be *ipso facto* exempt from the charge of heresy, considering that their attitude of seeking conflicts with the assumption of their holding any erroneous doctrine.[3] He also distinguishes between intellectual and moral error, pointing out that orthodoxy by no means implies ethical rectitude, and illustrating his position by the quarrels and errors of the apostles, the ill-tempers of the Fathers, the various crimes and misdemeanours of Popes, &c. Incidentally Ockam expresses himself with merited severity on the nefarious hypocrisy of the Romish Church in yielding up heretics after condemning them to death, to be punished by the secular arm: 'Dangerously,' he says, 'do they play the fool who suppose that those only are homicides who kill men with their hands and not rather those by whose counsel, fraud, and incitation men are slain.'[4]

On the other hand, we must in fairness admit that Ockam, as a jealous Franciscan, does not seem inclined to allow their great enemy, Pope John XXII., many extenuating circumstances in respect of the heresies he alleges against him; while it must also be acknowledged that his accusations turn upon abtruse questions and subtle distinctions which it is difficult to believe he would have pronounced sufficiently important for the condemnation of an inferior heretic. The chief of the Pope's incriminated opinions was his limiting the Beatific Vision of the Deity to the state of the blessed *after the day of Judgment*[5]—intended, no doubt, as a corrective of the prevailing mysticism, but which Ockam with his mystical brethren bitterly resented, as an unauthorized interference with the extent and duration of their supernatural illumination.

[1] Goldast, ii. p. 639: 'Ubi incidit ambiguitas vel generalitas verborum in doctrina alicujus scribentis aut docentis recurrendum est ad intentionem loquentis ut ipse seipsum exponat.'

[2] *Ibid.* p. 462: 'Nemo mentiens judicandus est qui dicit falsum quod putat verum;' with which may be compared the definition of heresy propounded by William of Champeaux, 'Hæresis stricte accepta est *scienter* veritatem impugnare.'—Michaud, *Guill. de Champ.* p. 285.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 754: 'Qui quærunt autem cauta sollicitudine veritatem, corrigi parati, cum invenerint, nequaquam sunt inter hæreticos computandi.'

[4] *Ibid.* p. 461.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 761.

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This leads me to another and very different phase of Ockam's mind. We have already seen that, notwithstanding his Skepticism, Ockam is not an extreme destructive. There are certain conservative and semi-dogmatic instincts in his intellectual formation, and any estimate of him which took no account of these would be equally untrue and one-sided. It will help us to understand this idealistic phase of Ockam's character and its relation to his Skepticism if we bear in mind his definition of faith. According to him, faith is of two kinds, acquired and infused. The first is the conviction based upon experience, rationality, the ordinary growth of the mind in knowledge. The second, on the contrary, is a supernatural product, a Divinely implanted belief in dogmas transcending common methods of verification. Now of acquired faith Ockam thinks there may be different degrees according to the measure of probability, experience, and other human elements constituting it, so that from this standpoint the different articles of a creed may have each its own standard of credibility; whereas of infused faith there can be only one kind, and its reception of dogmas is therefore uniform. You will see that this dualism of faith, while reminding us of Aquinas's natural and supernatural intellect, corresponds pretty nearly to Ockam's double-truth, and is a principle which clearly contains elements of Skepticism as well as of mysticism. But Ockam takes some pains to prove that their relations are not so mutually exclusive as might at first sight appear. He points out, *e.g.* that notwithstanding their different origin, they are not incommensurate with each other, for in most human attainments, as, for instance, in the acquisition of languages, the operation of both is identical. He also maintains that infused faith must possess some sanction and guarantee for its assertions, either from the mere human acquired faith whenever this is possible,[1] or from the teaching of Scripture, or from the consentient testimony of the universal (not Roman) Church. He moreover refuses to allow that infused faith is of itself either infallible, or that its presence is incompatible with an erroneous 'acquired faith.'[2] He is also careful to assert the individuality of the recipient of infused faith. Hence it is not the dogma of the Church as such that it receives, nor any other external authoritative truth, but the dogma or truth

[1] *Sent.* iii. qu. viii. P.: 'Potest Deus errare in intellectu viatoris habitum fidei quo inclinatur immediate ad credendum omnes articulos fidei supposita fide *acquisita respectu uniuscujusquam*.'

[2] *Sent. ibid.*: 'Non est repugnantia formalis inter errorem acquisitum et fidem infusam.'

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as presented to and implanted in the mind of the believer by the supernatural working of Divine agencies. So solicitous is Ockam to guard the native freedom and independence of the mind from being injured by an excessive and predominant supernaturalism.

The nature of Ockam's 'infused faith' gives the key to the character of his mysticism. That he was no mystic, in the sense either of St. Bernard or Eckhart, is very obvious. He is quite incapable of sacrificing his intellect at the shrine of religious dogma and asceticism, as did the former, or of merging his individuality in a Pantheistic conception of the universe, as did the latter. On the contrary, all the main tendencies of Ockam's thought were directed to the preservation and autonomy of man's reason and personal independence. His mysticism, therefore, as in the case of other Skeptics, was largely tempered by rationalism, and was more intellectual than emotional. But it is impossible to deny its existence or importance. It formed the counterbalancing element to his Skeptical analysis. Like the categorical imperatives of Kant and similar expedients of other Free-thinkers, it restored what the natural reason had found needful to surrender. The evolution of this semi-mysticism from Ockam's idealism is readily understood. His restriction of the highest knowledge to the direct deliverances of consciousness was the first step in the movement; his distrust of all external phenomena was the second. Consistently he failed to discriminate between the facts of consciousness when their excitatory causes happened to be outward phenomena, and when they were purely spiritual, supersensuous notions. He allows, *e.g.* that there might be an intuition of things that never actually existed. Hence both sensuous and supersensuous cognitions possessed the same basis, and so far the same validity. As he himself puts it, 'Sicut sensibilia ad sensum, sic phantasmata ad intellectum'[1]—'Sensible objects are to the senses as are phantasms to the intellect,' or as he elsewhere expresses the same truth, 'Intuitive cognition . . . may be caused either naturally or supernaturally.'[2] In harmony with this principle, Ockam did not attempt to differentiate on grounds of reality the impressions forced on him by external phenomena, and the spiritual apperceptions the religious instincts he conceived himself to possess. Thus his conviction of the Divine existence which his reason failed to demonstrate was obtained by the affirmation of infused faith, and a similar restoration was effected in the case of other truths. Nor was Ockam indisposed on other grounds to grant all reasonable

[1] *Sent.* i. dist. iii. qu. vi. [2] *Sent.* ii. qu. xiv.

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importance to the instinctive postulates of the religious thinker, as well as to the self-assertions of the mystic. For mysticism, as well as Skepticism, was in reality a movement of freedom opposed to the coercion of philosophy and to the dogmas of the Church. The alliance of the mystic and the ecclesiastic, as in the case of Bernard, was by no means an indispensable conjunction. In some respects it was even incongruous. The subjective standpoint of the mystic made him not only independent of, but averse to, the externalities of sacerdotalism and its rites. His own conviction of enlightenment might indeed reach a point which rendered Christianity as a Revelation quite superfluous. There was therefore enough self-assertion and individual liberty in the mystic standpoint to justify its acceptance by a Free-thinker like Ockam. The extent to which he carried his mysticism seems difficult to determine. He does not appear to have left any formal treatise on the subject, so that his opinions can only be gathered from the many incidental remarks [1] which are scattered up and down in his voluminous writings. The maxim, itself begotten of Skepticism, that all higher knowledge must be intuitive and immediate, formed his starting-point. He thence concludes that God's knowledge being perfect must be of this kind; so also must be the knowledge of angels and beatified spirits. But it is not confined exclusively to Deity or to the denizens of heaven. Terrestrial beings may share the blessedness—indeed, the capacity for beatification is an affection of every reasonable being, as is also the intuitive assurance which is its chiefest characteristic. The stock illustration of this supernatural illumination, both with Ockam and other mystics, is 'Paulus post raptum'—'St. Paul after his rapture.' In mystical lore this was also the accepted instance of the highest degree of beatification to which a mortal could aspire. But either this or an inferior state of assurance might, according to Ockam, be conferred by God on any of His chosen servants, so that through Divine interposition, yet without the beatific vision, a man might be convinced by direct intuition of the truth of articles of faith unattainable by human reason.[2]

As there is thus a double capacity on the part of man, acquired and infused faith, so is there a twofold object to correspond with it. There is, says Ockam, an earthly and a heavenly knowledge. There is a theology of the human wayfarer (*viator*), there is also a

[1] See especially Goldast, p. 764, &c. and *Sent.* iii. qu. viii.

[2] *Quod.* v. qu. iv. the subject of which is 'Utrum Deus potest causare in viatore noticiam evidentem de credibilibus sine visione Dei?' The question is answered in the affirmative.

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theology of the blessed. Not that these states of knowledge are different in kind so much as in degree. Acquired faith passes gradually into the transcendental condition of infused faith, while the latter also proceeds by degrees of beatification from the lowest stage to the highest. But in its terrestrial stages acquired faith might conceivably, as we have observed, be truer than a given condition of infused faith, when the latter, *e.g.* is the mere unauthenticated dream of a visionary; and as a rule infused faith, even when supernaturally conveyed, presupposes acquired faith. Thus Ockam tries to temper his mysticism by a certain measure of the rationalism and Skepticism which were the primary constituents of his intellect.

How far Ockam conceived himself to be the object of supersensuous illumination it is not easy to say. Nowhere does he profess to have been especially enlightened on any point as to which naturally acquired knowledge proved insufficient, unless possibly when he speaks of having been coerced into crediting certain dogmas of the Church which he would not have received of his own free-will. For although in relation to Romanism this assumed coercion is no doubt ironical,[1] yet in relation to the Church *Universal* and his own theory of infused faith the profession of compulsion may have been sincere. Certainly his acceptance of doctrines transcending reason is distinctly based upon supernaturally acquired conviction, which, however, may only mean that what he calls 'infused faith' we should now term the unconditional assertion of his own religious instincts, or the expression of his belief in the necessity and superhuman character of religious truth.

But it is time to draw to a close. We have, then, in Ockam a Skeptic and a Free-thinker of a very pronounced kind. Perhaps the latter phase of his character is a little more distinctly marked than the former. His works, like his life, convey the impression that love of liberty was his one absorbing passion. There was nothing in his judgment within the scope of human speculation or practice so inherently sacred as to be exempt from criticism—nothing which could claim immunity from the touch-stone of reason. A doubtful dogma of the Church was in itself no more privileged than the person of an obnoxious Pontiff, as, *e.g.* John XXII. His Skepticism was in many respects an inevitable outgrowth of his Free-thought. His intellectual instincts were arrayed against op-

[1] Comp. Rettberg's article, 'Occam und Luther,' in the *Studien und Kritiken* for 1839.

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pressive dogma just as his social feelings were against every form of ecclesiastical or political tyranny. Here also his impulses were entirely impartial. He did not manifest a greater aversion to the dogmas of the theologian than to those of the philosopher. On the other hand, so far as any difference is perceptible, he is more inclined to favour the tenets of the Church than those of the Schools. His clerical education and idealist sympathies combined to give him a bias on the side of theology. But this prejudice, as we have seen, is not very great. For the most part the universals of realists, the pronouncements of Popes, the decrees of councils, stand one and all on the same platform. They are all fair objects of criticism and investigation. They may turn out to be true, harmonizing with the intellectual processes and religious perceptions of mankind, or they may prove—as in the case of universals—to be false. In the former event they are to be received, in the latter to be discarded.

But if Ockam's Skepticism is allied to his love of freedom, it is none the less founded upon his idealism. Like the intellectual hermit, which every true Skeptic is, he retires to the recesses of his consciousness, as to a solitary watch-tower, whence he examines with suspicious glance whatever phenomenon or word may present itself for his acceptance. Behind both phenomenon and word he endeavours to find demonstrable truth—in his own words, real things; and he is not certain whether in their modes of presentation both the former and the latter serve to hide or at least to disguise the truth. Especially does he distrust human language. Knowledge must, he thinks, relate to things. The consciousness of the knower and the object known constitute the two extremities of a chain of which the intermediate links in most cases are words. To these words Ockam applies the tests of psychology and dialectic. He finds that while differing in directness of signification and therefore in value, all words are mere arbitrary conventional signs, related inherently and necessarily neither to the knower nor to the thing known. And yet, notwithstanding their uncertain, fluctuating position, words rule the world. Men use empty abstractions as if they were veritable things, and make inferences from imperfect inductions, as if they themselves were gifted with omnipotence. Ockam thus demolished the enormous Gothic temple of realism in which so many mediæval thinkers had worshipped, or rather he proved that what they deemed a solid structure was no more than an unreal eye-deceiving phantasmagoria. The universals which they thought imparted reality and eternity to all existing things he proved to be nothing more than hollow

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abstractions or pretentious names. Their philosophy was but specious verbiage; their theology, so far as it differed from primitive Christianity, indemonstrable by natural reason—a revelation of a whole necessitating perpetual revelations as to each of its parts. Their supposed science was only nescience. Reduced to demonstrable proportions, the dimensions of human knowledge were thus exceedingly small. Universals were only singulars—mere individual names or concepts. Generalizations and classifications, such as species and genera, had no more reality than that allowed them by their human creators. Words were only conventional signs, signifying the arbitrary volition of those who devised or imposed them, but possessing no relation to objective truth. Nay, more, there could be no knowledge of external things as such. The knower could only apprehend what was in actual contact with his consciousness. Hence the mental world of the thinker comprehended the sum of all cognoscible things. Ockam might have used the pregnant expression of Picus Mirandula, 'Knowing himself, the thinker learns to know all things in himself.'

I have already hinted that Ockam's Skepticism comprehended the relativity of ethical science. Partly this was a corollary from his belief in the supremacy of man's intuition and the comparative subordination of all external rules. Partly it was the effect of his making human volition the centre-point of his morality. Not that Ockam believed that virtue was innate; on the contrary, he held that both in its initiatory stage as suggesting moral conduct, and in its maturity as a confirmed moral habit, it was acquired.[1] He therefore maintained that there could be no true moral science unless we applied that name to an aggregate of our own practical experiences, and the innumerable speculations of ethical theorists. But he was uncertain which was inherently superior, whether practice or speculation, maintaining that this depended on circumstances.[2] While, however, no absolute law of moral science could be propounded,[3] he granted that there were some axioms in ethical philosophy which were self-evident, as, *e.g.* 'That the will ought

[1] *Sent.* iii. qu. xi.

[2] *Sent.* Prol. qu. xii. Z.

[3] He sometimes allows (*e.g. Sent.* ii. qu. xix.) that morality is dependent on the Divine commandment; so that, had it pleased God to enjoin theft or adultery, those acts would have been meritorious. As he, moreover, regards the Divine volition to be perfectly free and arbitrary, this is only another mode of affirming the relativity of moral science. Comp. Jourdain, *Phil. de Thomas d'Aquin*, vol. ii. p. 201.

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to conform to right reason. That every evil is to be avoided,' &c. So far indeed as such a science is to be determined by personal experience, it may have more certainty than others in the proportion that every man has a more assured knowledge of his own acts than he can have of the acts of other men.[1]

Ockam's theory of causation must also be reckoned among the doctrines exhibiting his Skeptical propensity. He does not, indeed, deny the causal nexus on the same grounds as those employed by Sextos Empeirikos, *i.e.* that our sole reason for affirming it is our observation of concomitance or succession in two given phenomena, but his ratiocination as to supreme and secondary, complete and partial, simple and compound, real and contingent causes has the effect of making all causation in its final determination absolutely indemonstrable.[2] Sometimes he appears inclined to take refuge in a mystical solution of the question by making the will of God the sole efficient cause of all that takes place in the universe, for he maintains that the production of a given effect by a secondary cause cannot be proved,[3] and that 'a cause of a cause is the cause of the thing caused.'[4] But this is a categorical imperative, an arbitrary pronouncement of faith. It does not imply an unity or uniformity in the chain of causation as manifested in the laws of the world, for Ockam grants that we have no knowledge either of the oneness or persistent energy of the Supreme Being. That the effect of his speculation on the subject was held to dissolve the ordinary sequence of cause and effect is shown by the theories of some of his reputed disciples who denied that any cause had power to produce an effect unless it were conferred on it *ad hanc rem* by God Himself.

Perhaps, however, the Skeptical implications of Ockam's teaching transcended in the elaboration of disciples the limits he himself assigned them. Indeed, this seems exemplified in the development they received after his death, as well as during his life. Roughly we may subdivide that influence into two kinds, harmonizing with the Skeptical and idealistic moments of his own mental standpoint.

We have already seen that the influence of Ockam's writings was alleged to be so disastrous to general knowledge that the reading of his works was prohibited at the university of Paris so early as the year 1339. But twenty years before, his name had become a power in that seat of learning. Buridanus, a disciple of

[1] *Quod.* ii. xiv.
[2] *Ibid.* lib. ii. qu. iv.
[3] *Sent.* i. dist. ii. qu. x.
[4] *Ibid.* i. dist. ii. qu. x.

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Ockam, became at that date rector of the university, and appears to have taken advantage of his position to introduce his master's doctrines. So successfully had he accomplished this that the decree of 1339 is expressly said to have proved ineffective. The masters of arts would neither give up the study of Ockam nor the opinions they had thence acquired. Accordingly the decree was, as we have noticed, repeated with stronger fulminations in the following year. The extent of Ockamist Skepticism at this early date is shown by the list of incriminated errors in Bulæus's 'History of the University.' Thus, the masters, bachelors, and scholars in the faculty of arts are forbidden to affirm the verbal falsity (as distinct from the real) of any given proposition—that no one shall affirm that every proposition is false which may seem false to his own personal understanding of its terms—that no proposition is to be distinguished (*i.e.* that all words, terms of propositions, &c. are to have, in every case, a single unequivocal meaning)—that no one shall say that a proposition must not be conceded if it is not true in his own personal sense—that no one shall assert that there can be no knowledge of things (as distinct from words), since in all sciences words are used for things—that no one shall maintain simply and without qualification, that Sokrates, Plato, God, and created things are nothing.[1] These are evidently inferences from Ockam's teaching transcending in some cases his own position, but they are invaluable as showing the course taken by his doctrines in the minds of enthusiastic followers. As a special example of the same influence we may regard the tenets of a certain Nicolas of Autricuria, which were condemned in Paris in 1348, the year after Ockam's death. This daring thinker seems to have reaffirmed Ockam's theory as to the need of immediate cognition by saying that if men were to turn their intellect to things instead of the sayings of Aristotle and his commentators they would soon acquire knowledge. He also denied that we could have any knowledge of God—that a causal sequence could in any case be asserted—that eternity could be predicated of anything—that phenomena are necessarily true, &c. Other examples of Ockam's influence over individual thinkers might easily be adduced,[2] but the attempt is needless. Nominalism in some of its varied forms soon became the dominant creed of all European universities that were animated by the new spirit of Free-thought and repugnance to religious and intellectual servi-

[1] Bulæus, quoted by D'Argentré, *Coll. Jud.* vol. i. p. 339.

[2] Comp. Prantl, *Logik*, vol. iv. for an account of Ockam's influence in dialectics and philosophy.

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tude. Of this movement in the end of the fourteenth and during the fifteenth centuries Ockam was the accredited leader. His works were the scriptures, his disciples the apostles, of the new gospel of human liberty. His labours were a legacy to the future rather than a gift to the present. His own anticipation of their effect was the ordinary forecast of the Free-thinker, conscious of opinions and aspirations in advance of his time, viz. that they would prove stimulating to 'future zealous strivers for truth, righteousness, and the common-weal.'[1] The chief issues of this new culture as propounded by the Ockamists may be enumerated as—an assertion of individual freedom and independence, both religious and political—a distrust of verbal abstractions, idealities, and generally of all substitutions of words for things—a definition of dialectic which made it essentially hypothetical and uncertain—a complete demarcation of theology and philosophy, so that what one affirmed the other might justifiably deny—a special repugnance to Papal despotism and dogma, and a disposition to distinguish the Catholic from the Roman Church—a longing for greater simplicity in thought, creed, and life which found its ideal in the simple moral teaching and humble life of Christ and His Apostles: in some cases, too, a mystic conviction of direct supernatural intercourse with God. These teachings, all of them bearing the stamp of freedom, were eagerly embraced by increasing numbers of disciples, in some cases where direct contact with Ockam or his writings could scarcely be traced. Hauréau's remark of the unconscious nominalism of Peter Lombard and Aquinas might also be applied to the leading thinkers of Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Nominalism achieved the highest point to which any novel mode of thought can aspire by becoming a widely diffused indeterminate influence, in which special methods, definite articles of faith, names of original founders, were submerged and lost. Leading thinkers in France and Italy adopted the current philosophy without even caring to trace it back to its fountain-head in Ockam or Roscellin. The initial doctrines of Descartes were only reproductions of Ockam's teaching. Ramus, in his warfare against Aristotelianism, borrowed unknowingly some of his most potent weapons from Ockam's armoury. Montaigne and his fellow-Skeptics adopted not a few of his methods, and reasserted his conclusions. But for us Ockam's chief interest lies in his nationality. He is, in my opinion, the true father of English philosophy. He represents all those qualities generally recognised

[1] Goldast, ii. p. 889; comp. Contzen, *ut supra*, p. 129.

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as characteristic of our best thinkers. Bacon, Locke, Hobbes, Berkeley, Hume—all our great lights in philosophic thought—find in his speculations a point of departure and suggestion. Though his own intellectual proclivities did not lead him to explore natural phenomena, he undoubtedly prepared the way for the experimental philosophy by calling men's attention from the empty abstractions and verbal knowledge of Scholasticism. His demand that the mind should be in actual contact with the outer world, and his opinion that science was concerned with things, not words, point in the same direction. Thus the experience-philosophy of Bacon and Locke, as well as the nominalism of Hobbes, the idealism of Berkeley, the Skepticism of Hume, find in Ockam a common precursor and forefather. While the love of freedom and independence, the stress on practice rather than theory, the strongly marked regard for common-sense with which we are usually credited as a nation, are also conspicuous in the most illustrious Englishman of the fourteenth century.

Nor was Ockam's influence less manifested on the side of his idealism and mysticism. By this also he gave an impulse to Freethought, liberal culture, and reforming zeal, both within and without the bounds of the Church. His disciples Peter d'Ailly and Gerson were the leaders of the great movement of Latin mysticism in the fifteenth century. This was distinguished from the German mysticism of Eckart and Tauler by the affinity it maintained with the Schoolmen, especially the mystics among them, as St. Bernard, Hugo de St. Victor, and Ockam; by its adherence to the Latin tongue, and to a great extent to the dialectic and science of the Middle Ages. It was also distinguished by greater restraint in mystical speculation, by a reluctance to abandon reason in the search for supersensuous cognition, by a dislike of Pantheism. Latin mysticism takes, indeed, a new rise from Ockam and the 'Spiritual Franciscans.' St. Bernard had contrived to bring all his ecstatic fervours and transcendental knowledge into subjection to the dogmas of Rome. Ockam and others did good service in showing that this submission was not necessary for the Christian mystic. Among these thinkers arose the conception of a Church—more truly catholic, broader, purer, more like the spiritual community designed by Christ than the corrupt Church of the Popes. The extent and beneficent effects of this movement of religious freedom and anti-sacerdotalism we cannot stay to pursue, but Ockam has a prominent place in it as a powerful and courageous coefficient.

Still more vigorously, however unconsciously, did Ockam co-operate in the *Præparatio Evangelica* of Protestantism. As is

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generally known, he is to a considerable extent the intellectual father of Luther and of the German Reformation. Erfurt was, during Luther's studies and struggles there, one of the universities of which nominalism had taken the firmest hold. There teachers of the new philosophy, like Gabriel Biel, Peter d'Ailly, and William of Ockam, held undisputed sway. Luther eagerly studied all these, but Ockam was his supreme authority. He describes him as 'undoubtedly the chiefest and most ingenious of scholastic doctors.'[1] The extent of his obligations to our Skeptic it would be scarce possible to overrate. Luther had points of contact not only with his nominalistic polemic against mediævalism, his antagonism to the Papacy, and his general sympathy with freedom, but also with his idealist and semi-mystical standpoint. Hence it is not too much to say that 'Ockam's philosophy,' transmuted in the alembic of his disciples' warmer feelings and religious intensity, became 'Luther's theology.' There are few of Luther's characteristic doctrines that may not claim the paternity or fraternity of Ockam's suggestions. Thus only to instance the more prominent among the analogies between Ockam and Luther: Ockam's Skepticism and suspensive reticence in controversy may be compared with the self-abrogation, 'redigi in nihilum,' which Luther placed in the first rank of his religious requirements. The distrust of all external phenomena (language included) of the former became the distrust of external works and religious rites of the latter. The stress on intuition of the master easily passed into the faith, personal conviction, &c. of the disciple. Both alike shared the doctrine of 'double-truth;' both believed in the superiority of Scripture to the decrees and dogmas of the Church; both shared the same ideas on the subject of the Lord's Supper, even if Ockam's belief was not what Luther maintained it to be—his own theory of consubstantiation. No doubt Luther passed away in the latter stages of his creed-development from the standpoint of Ockam, but this departure was as undoubtedly a dogmatic deterioration, such as we saw exemplified in the case of Augustine. Whatever is best in Luther and Lutheranism must certainly be attributed to Ockam.

Thus many-sided and profound was the influence of Ockam on European thought in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Thus powerfully did he co-operate in the advance of human knowledge and liberty. His works, with their supersubtle ratiocination, shared the fate of all mediæval learning, but the man himself, in his true personality and in his noble struggle with the twin giants—

[1] Comp. Dr. Köstlin's *Luther's Theologie*, vol. i. p. 29.

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the Gog and Magog of Scholasticism and Roman dogma—survived. Long after the disputes between realism and nominalism in their original forms had passed into oblivion, the anti-dogmatic and liberating tendency of Ockam's philosophy was recognised and valued by numberless disciples; so certain is it that the spirit of all true thought survives the form in which it was first embodied. The healthy Skepticism of Ockam was a vitalizing power in religion and philosophy when both his name and his writings had passed out of human recollection, except for the rare students who, like ourselves, have occasionally thought him worthy of disinterment and appreciative investigation.

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HARRINGTON. Candidly, Doctor, your account of Ockam reveals him in quite a new light—I don't mean as to his Skepticism, for that all historians of philosophy impute to him, but as regards his nominalism. If your presentation of him be correct, he is termed a nominalist on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle of being an extreme idealist.

TREVOR. Ockam was a nominalist in the sense in which the term was employed in his day, *i.e.* he maintained that universals were mere names, and not real beings existing outside the mind. But, as you remark, he was in truth a Skeptical idealist—a man who distrusted all knowledge and all methods of knowledge-communication not in immediate contact with his consciousness. The modern English thinker to whom he bears most resemblance is Bishop Berkeley.

ARUNDEL. Do you mean to say that Ockam has more affinity with Berkeley than with Hobbes?

TREVOR. Undoubtedly I do. Ockam's points of contact were not only more numerous but far more important with the former than with the latter. With Berkeley he shared a rooted distrust of language; together with the philosophical convictions that knowledge exists only in the mind, no cognition of external things as such being possible; that there is no distinction between the essence and attributes of an object; that all we can know of any being or object are the attributes, not the essence, &c. No doubt the terminology in the two cases are distinct. Thus, Ockam's essence is Berkeley's substance or matter. Ockam's intuitions or mental

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propositions are Berkeley's ideas. Further similarities might also be adduced relating to general character, estimate of Christianity, opinion as to the need of simplicity both in religious and philosophic thought, a common inclination to mysticism. . . . With Hobbes, on the other hand, Ockam would have had scant sympathy. His nominalism was too one-sided to satisfy Ockam's profound and comprehensive intellect. A superstructure of knowledge based on names was just that feature of realism which Ockam most opposed, while his whole soul would have revolted from the despotism which Hobbes thought the *summum bonum* of good government.

ARUNDEL. Do we then understand you to hold that the good Bishop of Cloyne was also a Skeptic?

TREVOR. Most certainly I do. He was an unconscious Skeptic in his method. His standpoint was almost identical with that of Sextos Empeirikos, as we saw on a previous occasion, and his theological conclusion is not an essential outcome of his philosophy. It is rather an unconditional affirmative, like Ockam's mysticism.

MISS LEYCESTER. For my part, I cannot help regretting Ockam's Skeptical iconoclasm, and the ruthless destruction of all those abstractions and generalizations of the realists: not that they added to our knowledge, but they were so convenient as receptacles or metaphysical pigeon-holes into which we could thrust every individual attribute or existence of any kind. They were such admirable contrivances for saving intellectual labour, and I do not see why 'labour-saving' should not be deemed a virtue in a philosophy as well as in a machine, especially on the hypothesis that truth is unattainable. I am not sure that we have gained so much more positive knowledge by the rejection of universals and all their train of supersensuous entities, or by the transformation of metaphysical into physical abstractions. Modern science teems with 'universals,' both as entities and as processes or laws, of which we know just as little as did mediæval theorists of the ideal creations of realists. We must, for instance, no longer speak of species as anything existing without the mind; we must only speak of them as manifested in a certain number of individuals. Yet when

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I take up a book on modern science, I see a skeleton which I am told is the bony framework of the genus 'homo,' or I see another plan which represents the typical formation of the species mammalia; or, again, I see a botanical diagram of a certain class of plants: allowing that some of these species are mere varieties, and that their characteristics are modifiable by their surroundings, &c. still some of them are, so far as we know, fixed species. Now why may not I conceive these unchangeable types as ideas existing in the Divine mind? or, if that notion is too Theistic for our Atheistic age, why should they not be represented as a finality grounded on irreversible laws of nature?

TREVOR. Yes, but the realist maintained that the type in the Divine mind originated the actual species or genera; but in the diagrams you speak of, inquirers infer the common structure by an examination of individuals. In scholastic terminology, what the realists asserted was the universal *ante rem*, prior to any human experience. What you assert is the universal *post rem*, the result of experience and induction.

MISS LEYCESTER. The distinction seems to me trivial. If there are laws of nature, which finally determine species in any given case, and which limit stringently the operation of modifying agencies, it is open to any one to say that such a morphological or physiological type is, so far as our experience can extend, an 'universal;' it has the properties of fixity in form as well as, given similar circumstances, eternity in time. I should apply similar reasoning to the question of morphological integration in the case of individuals. As to a solution of that problem, it does not appear to me that science has really progressed much since the time of Aquinas and Ockam. All we seem to have gained is a change of terminology. Thus what Aquinas and the Schoolmen called individuation we are now taught to call 'equilibration,' but the latter does not tell me any more than the former why of two brothers, *e.g.* one attains a stature of five feet six inches, the other six feet.

HARRINGTON. I know your affection for paradoxes, Florence, but you would not surely carry your veneration

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for realism so far as to refuse assent to the doctrine of evolution? But once grant that theory, and the finality of species will be an impossible assumption.

MISS LEYCESTER. As a conceivably demonstrable truth, I neither affirm nor deny the doctrine of evolution; indeed, as opposed to creationism in the older sense of the term, I think it the more probable theory; but still, I cannot wish to affirm my subjective notion of likelihood as an inevitable law of the universe, nor am I able to make the connecting links which seem to join two or more given species sufficiently elastic to connect all kinds of living beings in space and time.

ARUNDEL. But how far would you extend your apology for the defunct entities of realism? Would you say, *e.g.* that Trevor there is an ingenious amalgam of two species—one general, *i.e.* humanity, the other personal, *i.e.* Trevoreity; just as the realists said that Sokrates was compounded of humanity and Sokrateity.

MISS LEYCESTER. I am not concerned to defend the exaggerations of realism, but I doubt whether its main positions are as defunct as you think. Change of terminology does not imply an altered state of things any more than a change of place implies a transformation of those who make it. Each successive cycle of philosophy seems to me like a new shuffle and a new throw of cards or dice. Every new thinker renames the cards and the tricks, and thereby thinks he has established a claim to entire novelty. He has constructed 'a new heaven and a new earth' (not necessarily 'wherein dwelleth righteousness'). But the cards and dice remain what they always were; the tricks or possible combinations are also the same as before, both in number and kind. Thus by a new shuffle of the old cards we have substituted evolution for creation, but we are no whit nearer to the omniscience which would alone suffice to give us the true genesis of existing things. Again, what our forefathers called providence we call law or order, and by the change of name we think to get rid of the volitional element, but we bring back volition by ascribing intentions, tendencies, and proclivities to brute matter or unconscious agencies. You

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may see this ingenious *hocus pocus* in two of the later manifestations of German philosophy—I mean Schopenhauer and Hartmann—the volitionless will of the former is as instinct with purpose and determination as the most personal conception of Deity ever evolved from the brain of a theologian; while the unconsciousness of the latter presents all the properties and discharges all the functions which we identify with perfect consciousness.

ARUNDEL. With the gist of your remarks I fully agree. I wonder, by the way, what Ockam would have said of our new abstractions, as evolution. animism, &c.?

TREVOR. No doubt he would have treated them with the same Skeptical scorn as he did the universals of realists. He would have demanded that the induction on which they were based should be rigidly confined within the scope of actual experience; in other words, he would have us reduce universals to singulars, and general concepts to particular.

HARRINGTON. Ockam's distrust of words in that word-oppressed age was very natural, but I am inclined to think that he required an impossible standard of verbal perfection and definiteness. All common names and general terms must from the necessity of the case have meanings that are indefinite, and this is especially the case with words largely employed in controversy. Like old coins that have been long in circulation, the image and superscription must needs become indistinct.

MISS LEYCESTER. So much the better, in my opinion, if old words like old coins are to be media of communication between men of diverse opinions and modes of thought, because then there will be a fair pretext for every man to do what most men are in any case resolved to do—I mean, to devise an image and superscription for himself. The utility of these somewhat vague terms in controversies, religious or political, is indisputable. It permits a kind of eclecticism in verbal meanings which nevertheless allows the use of the same literal terminology; it postulates a healthy distinction between letter and spirit, and it brings language more nearly to the condition of the philosophic thinker, who sees that

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every object of thought is many-sided, and cannot therefore be wholly expressed by a single verbal symbol.

ARUNDEL. Vagueness, no doubt, is a necessary concomitant of linguistic growth; how far it is a desirable one is quite another question. I have a friend who, more in the spirit of Ockam, thinks it would be advantageous if the world were again visited with a Babel-confusion of tongues, so that the operation of naming, &c. might start afresh in human history. He thinks grammars and dictionaries might be advantageously curtailed, and that our sciences would greatly benefit in distinctness by such a catastrophe.

HARRINGTON. Certainly a thorough-going remedy for what, if a defect at all, is probably congenital. It is like sinking a ship to clear it of rats. The only advantage I can perceive as likely to result from it would be the opportunity afforded of establishing a single uniform language throughout the civilized world, and even that would be an infinitesimally small recompense for the loss of centuries of wisdom, truth-search, and philosophy. Besides, how long would the new tongue be in circulation before the old vagueness, the synonyms, connotations, equivocal terms, again came into use? If your friend desired his scheme to be completely successful, he should also stipulate for an entirely new constitution of the human intellect and its *modus operandi*.

MRS. HARRINGTON. What a curious feature in the history of nominalism and realism must have been the factions and street fights to which they gave rise in university towns. Now-a-days we can hardly imagine men's passions stirred by such questions as the existence or non-existence of universals.

TREVOR. Both parties derived their dogmatic virulence from the teaching and example of the Church; its infallibility and intolerance extended their baleful influence to every controversy that emanated from or could claim connection with it. Moreover, it must be remembered that the antagonism of realists and nominalists extended beyond its *primâ facie* object. The two great forces opposed to each other in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were really contending for most important interests. The conflict was between the old world of ecclesiasticism and ignorance, and

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the new world of the Renaissance. It was a contest between religious tyranny and Free-thought, and later on it resolved itself into the irreconcilable feud between Romanism and Protestantism. Realism summed up all the diverse influences which might be called mediæval conservatism. Nominalism comprehended all the varied activities that were free, vigorous, self-asserting, and innovating, which, therefore, might be called Liberalism. But, as you say, the contests between the sectaries present a curious characteristic of thought and manners. In Paris, the academic birthplace of nominalism, the new philosophy was compelled to give way for a time to the more orthodox realism. The decree forbidding Ockam's works in 1340,[1] but afterwards allowed to become inoperative, was repeated in 1373, in order to put a stop to the contentions between realists and nominalists.[2] On that occasion the writings of our Free-thinker were treated like other suspected books of the time, they were chained down to the desks on which they were placed.[3] But in 1381 the prohibition was removed, the restless spirit that breathed in Ockam's works was again let loose, and the Parisian students were allowed to study what they liked. The Ockamists of Paris seem to have been very generally his own fellow-countrymen, for the news of this liberation of his works was received with acclamation by the German, originally known as the English, nation.[4] Nominalism found a home in Ockam's own university of Oxford, where again we are told that the feuds between it and realism endangered the peace of the university. In Basle nominalism, as elsewhere, ranged around it all the neologian and anti-Romanist sections of the university, and, combined with the followers of Eckhart and Tauler, formed an influential party against the Catholics. At Tübingen too, to take one more example, nominalists and realists were located in different houses, called respectively the Houses of the Eagles and the Pea-

[1] D'Argentré, *Coll. Jud.* vol. i. p. 338.

[2] Le Gendre, *Traité de l'Opinion*, ii. p. 424.

[3] Le Clerc and Renan, *Hist. Lit. de la France au 14me Siècle*, vol. i. p. 358.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 359; comp. Mr. Bass Mullinger's *History of the University of Cambridge*, p. 196.

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cocks, and the warfare between the rival birds was at one time of very frequent occurrence.[1]

MRS. HARRINGTON. But why eagles and peacocks, Dr. Trevor? I should have thought the peacocks, not the eagles, best represented realists, accustomed to deck themselves out with the gaudy trappings and many-hued flowers of their imagination.

TREVOR. It was not the colour but the different habits of the birds that suggested the comparison. The eagle, as the bird of heaven, symbolized the soaring idealist. The peacock, as the bird of the earth, represented the claim of nominalists to be based upon solid fact and actuality.

MISS LEYCESTER. The comparison, I think, must have been originated by the realists. It is altogether in their favour.

HARRINGTON. I noticed you did not in your account of Ockam's fellow-Franciscans tell us anything of the curious controversies on the subject of poverty which divided them from their great enemy John XXII., maintaining that Christians could have only the usufruct, not the ownership, of anything. They were sometimes driven to ludicrous dilemmas in applying their principles in detail. Thus they gravely debated whether a man who ate bread or drank wine could be said to have any power over or property in the food or drink.[2] Common sense would have asserted that he must have exercised the fullest ownership over the food which he ate; but the Minorite doctors gravely decided that eating did not imply possession: it only inferred use.

ARUNDEL. A convenient argument for a thief who had stolen his dinner; he might at least have denied the possession of the viands he had used.

TREVOR. The fact was, that Scholasticism carried a minutely refining, pettifogging spirit into every subject-matter of discussion: and in method, as I have admitted, Ockam was almost as scholastic as Duns Scotus. One wonders

[1] Comp. Ulrich Hutten, *Opera*, ed. Böcking, Supplem. ii. p. 329.

[2] This ingenious problem was called 'The bread of the Cordeliers.' Comp. Le Gendre, *Traité de l'Opinion*, vol. ii. p. 424; and *Dict. Historique*, of MM. Chaudin et Delandine, art. 'Occam.'

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how he contrived so well to dress up his novel conclusions in the antique armour of the realists. He is in this respect an instructive example of the occasional possibility of putting new wine into old bottles. But in truth, Ockam is a Free-thinking philosopher in the garb of a Minorite Friar, and the incongruous appearance he thus presents is reflected in his writings. Hence, if he rises occasionally to the height of the Philosopher's far-reaching outlook, his cosmopolitan sympathies, his appreciation of freedom, he also sinks sometimes to the level of a monkish enthusiast. His ideas on property are nearly as fanatical as those of his brother Franciscans. He discusses the various kinds and modes of usufruct, with the subtlety which he expended on realist metaphysics. After all, Ockam's spirit, restless, daring, innovating, is to be found not in his method but in his conclusions. By these he contributed more than any Schoolman to break the yoke of Scholasticism, and for this he will always be remembered with gratitude and veneration.

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Miss Trevor. I presume our Ockam discussion is finished. As a matter of curiosity, I should like to ask a question as to the close of this the first session of our philosophical parliament. Alfred said some time back we were to have twelve sittings.

Trevor. True. We have already had ten evenings, and for the remaining two on Raymund of Sabieude and Cornelius Agrippa, Harrington has agreed to hold himself liable.

Miss Leycester. So I understand. But I thought you meant us to break off just at the Italian Renaissance. Now Raymund and Agrippa belong to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. We shall therefore have gone beyond our limit.

Trevor. No doubt. But we found both Raymund and Cornelius Agrippa difficult 'to place' in relation to the Italian and French Renaissance. They are outcomes of general Free-thinking influences existing in mediæval times rather than the special products of those great movements. We therefore decided to take them first, and so to clear the ground for our examination of the Skeptics which can clearly be classified as belonging to the Renaissance.

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MISS TREVOR. But when then may we expect our discussions to terminate?

HARRINGTON. It is now the last week in February. I shall be ready, I hope, with Raymund of Sabieude about the end of March; and so far as professional duties permit a forecast of the future, I trust my survey of Agrippa will be completed about the same time in April.

TREVOR. That will do very nicely. We shall in that case close our winter, but philosophical, evenings before the arrival of the merry month of May.

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EVENING XI.

RAYMUND OF SABIEUDE.

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'Est animorum ingeniorumque naturale quasi pabulum, consideratio, contemplatioque Naturæ. Erigimur, latiores fieri videmur, humana despicimus; cogitantesque supera atque cœlestia, hæc nostra ut exigua et minima contemnimus.'

CICERO, *Acad.* lib. iv.

'Magnus Dominus noster et magna virtus ejus et sapientiæ ejus non est numerus. Laudate eum Sol, Luna et Planetæ . . . quacunque lingua ad eloquendum Creatorem vestrum utamini. Laudate eum, harmoniæ cœlestes, laudate eum, vos harmoniarum cœlestes, laudate eum vos harmoniarum delectarum arbitri.'

KEPLER, *Harm. Mundi*, *Op.* x. p. 327.

'Homo naturaliter semper quærit certitudinem et evidentiam claram: nec aliter quiescit, nec quiescere potest, donec venerit ad ultimum gradum suæ certitudinis.'

RAYMUND OF SABIEUDE (*Theol. Nat.* chap. i.).

'Dubitationem tuam non invitus accipio; significat enim animum minime temerarium: quæ custodia tranquillitatis est maxima.'

AUGUSTINE, *Liber de Magistro*, *Op. om.* i. p. 558.

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EVENING XI.

RAYMUND OF SABIEUDE.[1]

HARRINGTON. Our subject on this occasion is a very remarkable but little known man, Raymund of Sebonde, as most of the historians of philosophy call him, or of Sabieude, as we are now taught to name him.[2]

ARUNDEL. Either designation is equally a puzzle to me. Where on earth is Sebonde or Sabieude? Is it one of the Society Islands, or a native settlement in Central Africa?

HARRINGTON. Not quite so far as either. It is probably derived from some village or township in Spain, which none of Raymund's biographers have succeeded in identifying, but

[1] The following are the chief authorities referred to on the subject of Raymund of Sabieude:—

Raimundi de Sabunde Theologia Naturalis seu Liber Creaturarum. Solisbaci 1852. This edition, however, does not contain the remarkable Preface which is quoted from the next-mentioned work.

Le Christianisme de Montaigne. (Labourderie.) Paris 1819.

La Théologie Naturelle de Raymond Sebon. Traduicte nouvellement en François, par Messire Michel Seigneur de Montaigne. Paris 1581. This is the second edition of Montaigne's celebrated translation.

De Natura Hominis Raimundi Sebundii Dialogi: Viola Animi ab ipso auctore inscripti. Lugduni 1544. This work is only a summary, 'un plat rechauffé,' as it has been called, of the *Theologia Naturalis.*

Of German monographs, the following have been consulted:—

De Theologia Naturali Raimundi de Sabunde. F. Holberg 1843.

Dissertatio de Raymundo de Sabunde. Auctore Rothio 1846.

De Raimundi quem vocant de Sabunde vita et scriptis. Kleiber 1856.

Montaigne, *Essais,* book ii. chap. xii.

Bayle, *Diction.* art. 'Sebonde.'

Zöckler, O., *Theologia Naturalis.* Frankfort 1860. *Geschichte der Beziehungen zwischen Theologie und Naturwissenschaft,* vol. i. parts i. and ii.

[2] Comp. Dr. Kleiber's monograph, pp. 7, 17. He informs us that there are places in Spain which have the names Sabade, Sabaido, Sabando, Sabante, but no place called 'Sabunde.' See his essay contained in *Jahresbericht über die Dorothienstädtische Realschule.* Sept. 1856.

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which we may take to have been either his birthplace or the dwelling-place of his parents; and is indebted to that fact for the small amount of immortality it may be said to possess.

MISS LEYCESTER. Well, the place escaping our cognisance, what is known of the man?

HARRINGTON. Unluckily not very much, most of the statements about him being disputed. In the greater number of his biographies, you will find it said that he was born at Barcelona, but this is probably owing to his being confounded with another Raimund (Martin) who wrote the 'Pugio Fidei.' As his native place is uncertain, so is also the date of his birth, which is vaguely placed at the end of the fourteenth century. In short the only guaranteed fact about him is that he flourished as a professor in the University of Toulouse about 1432 to 1436.[1] In the oldest MS. of his 'Theologia Naturalis,' contained in the imperial library at Paris, Dr. Kleiber found the author thus described: 'compositus a reverendo magistro Raymundo Sabieude in artibus et medicina magistro, et in sacra pagina egregio professore.' And a similar description is found in some early printed editions of his work, whence we may infer that Raymund received a medical education, which he supplemented by a study of theology. Whether he entered into holy orders is not known, though, as he was permitted to lecture on theology, it is most probable that he did so. The time of his death is as uncertain as every other particular relating to him. However, he bequeathed to the world in his 'Natural Theology' the first treatise on an important subject which is far from being exhausted even in our own day; and though we cannot credit him as some have done with the invention of the phrase 'Natural Theology,'[2] his is undoubtedly the earliest systematic attempt to give it the signification it has borne ever since.

[1] This seems the date of the completion of the *Theologia Naturalis*, if we may credit the note appended to the older MS. of the work. See Dr. Kleiber, p. 4.

[2] The earliest use of the term is by Varro, quoted by Augustine, who discriminates three kinds of 'Theologiæ,' viz. 'fabulosa, naturalis, et civilis.' Comp. Augustine, *Op. om.* vii. col. 150–58.

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MRS. HARRINGTON. The only account of Raymund I had ever met,[1] until Charles began talking to Florence and myself about him, was in the well-known twelfth chapter of the second book of Montaigne's Essays. He evidently thought, and we must remember that this is the judgment of the father of French Free-thinkers, that Raymund's work possessed no small merits as a free-speaking and enlightened production. He describes its object, which he truly says was 'bold and courageous,' as 'an endeavour by human and natural reasons to establish and verify against Atheists all the articles of the Christian religion.'[2]

TREVOR. But as an orthodox divine would say, *more Atheistico*—in an Atheistical manner; or as Toland established Christianity, by attempting to prove it 'as old as the creation.' There is no doubt of Montaigne's interest in Raymund's treatise—it is overwhelmingly attested by his translation of it from the Spanish, a task which must have proved much more irksome to his desultory and dilettante methods of study than the composition of his Essays.

HARRINGTON. Montaigne's translation appears to have been made, not from the Latinized-Spanish, which he calls it,[3] but probably from the Latin itself. There is no trace, according to Dr. Kleiber, of the work having been written in

[1] Meric Casaubon is almost the only English writer of repute who has noticed Raymond and his work, though he, like Hallam, speaks of him in depreciatory terms: 'Raimundus de Sabanda, who lived about the year of the Lord 1430, hath set out a book entituled *Theologia Naturalis*; by which he doth undertake to prove all the mysteries of our faith by plain reason. I had once the book, but do not remember that I found much in him to satisfy me, or any sober man, I thought. Yet learned Grotius de Veritate mentions him as a considerable man, which I wonder at.'—Cf. *Credulity and Incredulity*, p. 16. Grotius classes Raymund with Vives and De Mornay as a writer on natural theology, and credits him with 'philosophical subtility.' It seems needless to point out which verdict would stand highest in the opinion of modern scholars, that of Meric Casaubon or Hugo Grotius.

[2] Montaigne, *Essais*, bk. ii. ch. xii. Didot's edition, p. 219.

[3] 'Ce livre est basty d'un espaignol barragouiné en terminaisons latines.' (*Essais*, ii. 12.) But the title to Montaigne's own translation tells us that it was 'traduite nouvellement *du Latin* en François, par Messire Michel Seigneur de Montaigne.' Cf. Rothe, p. 25; cf. also Brunet, *Manuel*, voce 'Sabunde.'

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Spanish, and I observe that Victor Leclerc in his notes calls it 'the Latin work of a Spanish divine.'[1]

ARUNDEL. I have just been glancing at your copy, Harrington. I see Raymund gives his book the cognomen, 'Liber creaturarum.' What a queer title! It is not what we should call a natural history, is it?

HARRINGTON. Oh no; and yet there is a good deal of natural history in it, conceived from a theological standpoint. 'Creatura,' as you know, is an awkward rendering of the Greek word κτίσις, and is Jerome's translation of the word in the well-known passage of St. Paul, Romans viii. 19–22; originally, therefore, it was the collective designation of the whole created universe, comprehending inanimate as well as animate beings. But this primary meaning seems to have been partly lost sight of by the Latin Schoolmen, who used the word in the same way that we now employ 'creature' to signify an individual part of the creation. Hence, when they wished to speak of the whole collective universe they were obliged to use the plural. Thus Albert the Great wrote a treatise on natural history which he called 'De creaturis,' and Raymund calls his book 'Book of the Creatures,' or created beings. A better title might have been obtained by reverting to the Greek original of the term and calling it, τὸ βιβλίον κτίσεως—'The Book of Creation'—in fact, he sometimes gives it in Latin this very name.

TREVOR. I suspect Raymund's Greek was not equal to the occasion, but it is an interesting fact that my profession may lay claim to him as a member. Of course this one circumstance goes far to account for the Free-thought and enlightenment which are said to mark his work, as well as for the scientific character of his method, which, I take it, was an attempt to base a system of theology on the little that was then known of natural science. The effort was in every respect commendable. Indeed, I think theologians generally ought to have a thorough preliminary training in physical science. Their theology would be thereby greatly improved. You remember Abelard's curious remark on the increase of Divine Grace, which falls to the lot of theologians

[1] This is also the opinion of Roth. See his monograph, p. 12.

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in proportion to their previous acquaintance with profane literature.[1]

HARRINGTON. Very true, but it is a serious detraction from Raymund's merits to find how completely the man of science finally becomes merged and lost in the theologian in the latter part of his work.

TREVOR. Well, his is not a solitary instance of a bipartite formation, to which one might perhaps apply the words of Horace :—

ut turpiter atrum
Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne.

I know you don't mind my jokes, Arundel.

ARUNDEL. Not in the least, especially when they are so utterly devoid of *vraisemblance* as the one you have just perpetrated. Horace's mermaid would be infinitely better represented by theology—the Divine science—degenerating as to her nether members by an alliance with a brutal and inhuman materialism.

MISS LEYCESTER. Raymund's chief importance, I presume, lies in his having influenced Montaigne so powerfully. I should like to know what elements in common Raymund's natural theology has with Montaigne's Essays—a question which the latter writer's celebrated 'Apology Chapter' answers very inadequately.

HARRINGTON. As adequately, perhaps, as we could have expected. No doubt he takes Raymund's book as a text or thesis for a desultory discourse on Pyrrhonism, Free-thought, the similarity of the reasoning faculties in animals and in man, and other general topics pertaining more or less to these subjects. But that is just Montaigne's careless, informal manner of treating everything. Even his translation of Raymund's book is stamped with his easy genial freedom and his impatience of restraint, for it is much more of a paraphrase than a translation. But he describes accurately enough the purport of the book, and eulogizes its merits; he says it is an appeal to nature to prove the doctrines of theology, thinks it might be usefully employed to counteract the

[1] See Evening IX. p. 278.

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Atheism then prevalent, and especially to oppose the teaching of Luther; for as the reformer had pronounced Romanism irreconcilable with Scripture, Raymund had demonstrated, according to Montaigne, that it could plead the sanction of the older revelation of nature in its favour. He further acknowledges that the arguments of Raymund being founded on reason are not of themselves conclusive, but require the sanction of faith. He also says that he knew a man in authority who had been converted from unbelief by Raymund's arguments; but with all these admissions I willingly admit that Montaigne's estimate of the 'Theologia Naturalis,' judging from the Essays, appears altogether insufficient, and for that very reason his obligations to the work are fewer than we might have expected. He evidently did not perceive either the strength or the weakness of the position Raymund had taken up; nor, although he admired its freedom and the novelty of its ratiocination, did he adequately realize their purport and extent. He did not discern, or at least did not choose to avow, the importance for all future freedom of thought, of Raymund's primary postulate, that nature itself was a Divine Revelation, both prior and superior to every other.

ARUNDEL. But does Raymund deliberately avow a principle so startling?

HARRINGTON. Undoubtedly he does, as you will shortly find when I come to my essay; and he so words his statement as to secure its fullest amplitude of meaning.

MISS LEYCESTER. But as you have told us that he ultimately makes nature testify to the truth of theology, his motive for exalting the former may have been his consciousness of the supreme importance of the latter.

HARRINGTON. Very likely. But if so, he acted in forgetfulness of the maxim: 'The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.' For centuries Christian theology had proudly asserted her sovereignty above all rival or pretended revelations. Nature, Judaism, Gentile wisdom, were regarded only as partial, imperfect communications of the Divine will; whereas, according to Raymund, nature constitutes the first and perfect revelation, the others being intended solely to throw fresh light on those features of it

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which had been obscured, not by its own defects, but by human blindness and infirmity. This is his starting-point. I have already warned you that in working it out he is far from being consistent.

TREVOR. Most great principles, when inchoative, have only a brief existence. Oftentimes they attempt, but fail, even to exist. One might say of them, 'The children are come to the birth, but there is not strength to bring forth.' What I consider remarkable in Raymund is that he stands on the verge of the most distinctive principles of the Renaissance. From the casuistical cobwebs of Scholasticism he appeals at once to nature and experience. I have heard the intellectual liberty that comes of idealism, dialectic, and metaphysics described as 'indoor freedom,' while that which arises from a study of nature was denominated 'outdoor freedom.' We are now, therefore, on the point of walking out into the fresh air after our confinement in the close cells and long labyrinthine corridors of the prison of the Schoolmen. The idealism of Erigena, the rationalism of Abelard, the eclecticism of Aquinas, the nominalistic Skepticism of Ockam, though I am far from denying their services to the cause of Free-thought, all pale into insignificance compared with the direct appeal to nature which Raymund initiated.

ARUNDEL. You are beginning to catch the nature-enthusiasm of the Renaissance, but of that I suspect Raymund was altogether innocent. Besides, you forget the moral of your last essay, and the lesson of Lovelace's lines—

> Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage.

We shall, moreover, discover all too soon that if nature gives her votaries mental freedom, the gift is not unalloyed with manifold dangers and temptations in the direction of lawlessness and licentiousness. . . . But if Raymund was so free, as you say, from the methods of the Schoolmen, at a period when those methods governed the thought of Europe, whence did he derive his education and training?

HARRINGTON. Raymund, as I have said, was a Spaniard, who came to Toulouse to lecture on, and probably to practise,

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medicine. We can have little doubt, therefore, that he received his medical training in the schools and universities of Spain—in other words, from Arab teachers. This fact is clearly attested by his book. Not only do incidental doctrines and opinions reveal an affinity to the teachings of Averroes, and other less celebrated teachers, but the very aim and scope of the work seems derived from Arab sources. Its intention, I have told you, was to derive all the dogmatic teaching of the Church from nature and reason, without the least aid from Revelation or any external authority of whatever kind. Now this appears to have been a favourite speculation among Arab thinkers. They were fond of imagining what religious or intellectual attainments a man would acquire guided solely by his own natural powers. The problem they set themselves was this: Given the outer world of phenomena as the object of thought, and the human reason as its appropriate subject, it is required to determine the ultimate conclusions as to religion or social duty that such a relation would generate; or, to put the matter otherwise: Given Robinson Crusoe, shipwrecked on a desert island, to find the approximations his unaided ingenuity would be able to effect towards satisfying the wants of civilized life. Two examples of these intellectual Crusoes belong to the Arab literature of the twelfth century. The first of these was the so-called 'Régime du Solitaire' of Ebn Badja, and the second and better known the 'Hay ben Jakdan' of Ebn Tophail.[1] The common purport of the two may be inferred from the expressed object of the latter, which is thus set forth in Ockley's English translation, 'The improvement of human reason . . . in which is demonstrated by what methods one may by the mere light of nature attain the knowledge of things natural and supernatural, more particularly the knowledge of God, and the affairs of another life.'[2] Now nothing is more likely than that a Christian,

[1] On these two works comp. Le Clerc, *Hist. Med. Arab.* ii. pp. 9, 114; Renan, *Averroes*, pp. 98, 99; Munk, *Mélanges*, p. 388.

[2] There are two English translations of *Hay ben Jakdan*, the first by George Ashwell (1686), from Pocock's Latin version, the second by Simon Ockley (1708), from the original Arabic. Most students of English literature are aware that this work suggested to John Kirkby his *History of*

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brought up at the feet of Arab teachers, as so many were in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, or else a convert from Mahometanism (and Raymund may have been either), should have applied this method to Christian dogma. Indeed, the evolution of nature-teaching which purported to reach its climax in Romanism was not greater than the development which by following the same course was alleged to terminate in the airiest summits of transcendental mysticism. Besides, there was the general movement of Arab rationalism and Free-thought of which Averroes is the most salient example, which maintained generally that Revelation is a natural product of the human faculties.[1]

ARUNDEL. Are we, then, to understand that Raymund's book, with its insistence on Church dogmas, was inspired solely by Mahometan influences?

HARRINGTON. No. Arab philosophy furnished the original conception and the foundation of the work, but in its construction Raymund made considerable use of Christian materials. This, however, is a point touched upon in my essay. Here I will only observe that there are in particular many incidental resemblances in his book to teachings of Aquinas, especially to his *Summa contra Gentiles*. You remember that when Montaigne consulted Turnebus as to its origin, the latter suggested that it might be a compilation from Aquinas—which it certainly is not.

MISS LEYCESTER. Well, we can now understand why the 'Theologia Naturalis' is Free-thinking. Men do not ordinarily take nature as their guide until they are dissatisfied with other and more directly authoritative expositions of truth—in other words, until they have already become Skeptics.

TREVOR. I think you are wrong, Miss Leycester. Men who are far from suspecting the veracity of their convictions often have recourse to nature to test or corroborate them. But I cannot say I think highly of the plan of appealing to nature as an exclusive test of truth. Men find in nature, as

Automathes, as to which comp. *Retrospective Review*, vol. x. 78–88, and Gibbon's *Miscellaneous Works*, ed. 1796, vol. i. p. 20.

[1] Renan, *Averroes*, p. 104.

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they do in Scripture, just what they themselves bring to its study. The countless systems evolved from nature prove the diversity of her utterances. Nevertheless, we must not underrate the service she has conferred on intellectual progress by opposing theological dogma, as well as on political freedom by resisting tyrants and lawless despotisms.

ARUNDEL. Thanks, Doctor. Your warning is timeously made, when we are now approaching the 'storm and stress' of the Renaissance, of which nature-worship formed one of the main principles. We must in truth use nature like every other great many-sided authority, eclectically, taking from it those principles, analogies, and truths which serve to counteract the mischief of other extreme conclusions, whencesoever drawn. The truth insisted on by John Stuart Mill and other modern thinkers, viz. that genuine civilization, refinement, with the other human graces that follow in their train, are attained rather by contravening than deferring to the dictates of nature, appears to possess an ethical and religious significance far in advance of most doctrines of current philosophy.

HARRINGTON. The Arab philosophers from whom Raymund drew, as I think, his information, would have cordially concurred in that. Nature was merely their *Gradus ad Parnassum*, the path by which they scaled the sublime heights of mystic rapture and poetic enthusiasm. Raymund also, notwithstanding his starting-point of the superiority of nature to Revelation, repeatedly insists in the course of his work that the different orders of beings in nature are but so many rungs of a ladder by which men ascend to God. . . . I will now begin my paper.

TREVOR. Before you do so, there is one question more I should like to ask, especially as I cannot boast a full acquaintance with the 'Theologia Naturalis.' Did you observe any distinct traces in it of Raymund's medical education?

HARRINGTON. Yes; the book is studded with quaint illustrations derived from the natural history of the day, from the supposed properties of bodies, which are often described as magical, and from the sacred attributes of numbers, letters, &c. I also made a note of some curiosities in phy-

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siological and pathological lore which I thought would interest you. Raymund propounds a grotesque analogy, in which the chief organs of the body and their functions are likened to the Persons of the Trinity and to man. Here is an extract:[1] 'The heart, the liver, and the head influence other members and give to them what they possess; for the liver gives grossness, and is as it were a body to the members, because it imparts to them gross humours, from which the members are made and nourished, and this it effects by the veins through which it sends and gives blood to the members. It is therefore the first man, so to speak, who gives only flesh. Then the heart itself gives to all members natural heat and vital spirit, by which all the members live and have vital being, and this it does through the arteries. And the heart itself resembles God, who gives life to the body, because as the soul animates the body so does that spirit or natural heat which the heart gives vivify the members. Hence it is like the soul to the members, because without such a spirit and heat the members would be dead and cease to exist. Next, the head itself, occupying the highest place above all the members, imparts to them sense and motion through the nerves. And the head is Christ,[2] because as the motion and sense proceeding from the head constitute the advantage of the members, so that which Christ gives conduces to the well-being of the soul and of the man.'[3] Raymund also gives us the contemporary theory of paralysis—a member is paralysed because it has lost its flow of spirits from the head, &c.; and other not less grotesque hypotheses are scattered up and down in his book. These theories are of course no more than the current suppositions of that period, and which always mark what Comte called the metaphysical stage of human knowledge. But inasmuch as we shall shortly see proofs of Raymund's enlightened and independent thought, we may be usefully reminded that on

[1] This analogy seems to be a modification, in the interests of Christianity, of the cabalistic lore respecting the correspondence of the Sephiroth, or high intelligences, with parts of the human body. Cf. Dr. Ginsburg, *Kabbala*, p. 11.

[2] This may possibly be an allusion to St Paul (Col. i. 18).

[3] *Theol. Nat.* p. 476.

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many points he shared the crude ideas and superstitions of his time.

MRS. HARRINGTON. What seems the most remarkable feature of old medical lore is its blending so curiously theology with science.

TREVOR. That, however, is no more than we might have anticipated. Theology had for so many centuries insisted on being the nursing mother of physical science, and had kept the infant so long in swathing-bands, that when, rickety and infirm, it began to walk, it was compelled to adopt for a time the old leading-strings. In fact, we have presented in successive stages of thought the same phenomenon of 'survivals' that we have in the evolution of species. History no more than nature *facit saltum*—proceeds by leaps. Every thought-formation contains distinct traces of that which preceded it, and that is the reason why classified stages of intellectual progress, like that formulated by Comte, can never be more than approximately true. The successions are much too gradual for distinct discrimination.

. . . . . .

Harrington then began to read:—

With Raymund of Sabieude we arrive at a distinctly new phase of Free-thought. He first propounds unconditionally the theory of nature being a Revelation of God's mind both prior and superior to any other. He asserts its self-sufficiency, interpreted by reason and experience, to lead men to all necessary truth, whether theological or ethical. Here therefore we have the commencement of a new antithetical to religious dogma of a peculiarly powerful kind, with which we shall have to reckon during the whole of our remaining survey of Free-thought. We might perhaps classify the disintegrating forces which at different epochs have exercised their power on ecclesiastical dogma as follows:—

1. General influence of classical literature.
2. Special influence of dialectic and Aristotle.
3. Considerations arising from reason, common sense, and human utility.
4. The Bible, regarded especially in its anti-sacerdotal aspects.
5. Nature, or physical science.

With the exception of the second, which may stand for the mainspring of Scholasticism, and the fourth, which is the ground-

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thought of the Reformation, these influences cannot be demarcated by separate historical epochs; for as we have seen two or more are frequently found co-operating, even in the case of a single mind, in liberating men from the thraldom of extreme dogma. Hence we are also unable to institute a comparative estimate of their effectiveness as agencies of Free-thought; for the degree of dissidence from or opposition to dogma attainable either by one or more of these causes will depend on the circumstances of the epoch, or the characteristics of the individual mind on which they operate. At the same time the experience of modern history tends to show that an intensity of antagonism to dogma, or, as it might be called, an appreciation of intellectual freedom, is attained by an exclusive devotion to natural studies far exceeding that inspired by other causes. The reasons for this are not difficult to find, and they have so often been discussed by different writers that we may for the time being omit their consideration. We shall presently have opportunities of studying the development of Raymund's naturalistic standpoint in the nature-worship of the Renaissance, especially in the instances of Bruno and Vanini.

Meanwhile, as we are now encountering a new force in the history of modern Free-thought, we may cast a retrospective glance at the part which nature and nature-ideas had played in Christian theology previous to the publication of Raymund's 'Natural Theology.'

We may accept it as a rule that a stress upon nature-teaching as a sanction or evidence of theology will always be in inverse ratio to the importance attached to dogma at any given time, or by any individual intellect. Extreme dogmatists and sacerdotalists regard the very conception of natural theology with suspicion, if not with positive aversion. On a previous occasion I insisted on the emphasis which Christ Himself laid upon the teachings of nature as exemplifying both the unjewish and undogmatic character of His gospel. Thus the impartiality of God's dealings is founded upon the unchangeable operation of natural laws, while implicit dependence on His Providence is urged by such purely naturalistic considerations as the feeding of birds and the painting of flowers. A similarly broad conception of the Divine government was held by St. Paul, who maintained the sufficiency for Gentiles of the law of nature. But with the growth of dogma in the Church, arguments from nature, reason, &c. met with the same fate as appeals to Gentile literature. Natural theology, as a witness outside the pale of ecclesiastical Christianity, was regarded as fatally biassed. Its testimony was assumed to be warped, or, if

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prejudice could not be proved, it was a sufficing cause of suspicion that it was independent. It drew its evidence from laws and phenomena over which the Church could have no control. Hence it was soon assigned, especially by the Latin Church, that subordinate, ancillary position it has generally occupied in the history of Christianity. Such a position was not only inferior, but of itself tended to contravene, falsify, and suppress the obvious lessons of nature. Her clear utterances were to be listened to just as long as they were in harmony with the dictates of the Church, or might be made so with a little adroit manipulation. The consequent perversion of her teachings in support of foregone conclusions was analogous to the misconstruction of them which attended the theory that the whole creation was designed for the pleasure and advantage of the denizens of our earth. Nor was it only the dogmatic self-assertion of the Church and the growth of sacerdotalism that thus perverted or inhibited the teachings of nature; other secondary causes contributed to the same result. The excessive development of particular doctrines, as, *e.g.* the Fall of Man, justified, even if it did not demand, a vilification of the nature which was assumed to lie under the primæval curse. The dogma of eternal punishment and the physical tortures of the damned, the manifold personification and materialization of the powers of evil, their supposed activities in every domain of nature, imparted a terribly sinister aspect to all natural phenomena. The development of that fanatical disdain of all mundane affairs, well styled 'other-worldliness,' suggested a contempt for nature as a mean and transitory halting-place on the road to a better order of things. The Apocalyptic vision of a new heaven and a new earth, common as it was to philosophers and divines, presupposed the inferiority of those in actual existence. Besides, and above all, the rapid and enormous growth of asceticism, the systematic repression of whatever could conduce to the pleasure of humanity, rendered even the most innocent delight in nature a sinful and forbidden indulgence. I am far from maintaining that these anti-naturalistic influences were coeval with the apostolic age, or with the Church of the first two centuries. The earliest teachers of Christianity—in harmony with the spirit of its Founder—seem imbued with a cordial appreciation both of the beauties and wonders of nature.[1] Clement of Rome, Theophilus of Antioch, Minucius Felix, appeal to natural

[1] Comp. on this point, Dr. O. Zöckler, *Theologia Naturalis*, p. 12, &c. and the same author's *Geschichte der Beziehungen zwischen Theologie und Naturwissenschaft*, vol. i. pt. i. p. 83.

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phenomena as independent evidence of the Divine wisdom and goodness. It was with the mischievous dogma-induration of the third and fourth centuries that the free testimony of nature became suspected and disregarded. Lactantius and Augustine—though the latter is not consistent in the matter—are foes of nature, and despisers of her teaching;[1] while Eusebius declares all researches into naturalistic and psychological subjects 'useless, erroneous, and a vain waste of time.'

There is also a considerable difference between the Greek and Latin Fathers in respect of their estimate of nature, and its service to theology. Largely imbued with the genial spirit, as well as employing the language of ancient Greece, the Fathers of the Alexandrian School regarded nature with somewhat of that comprehensiveness and tender sympathy which distinguished the most nature-loving people of antiquity. Among these nature seems partly relieved from her ancillary position, and is awarded her own merits independently of theology. Humboldt in his 'Cosmos'[2] has pointed out the profound sensibility to natural phenomena, as well as the descriptive power, of St. Basil. He quotes a letter of his to Gregory Nazianzen, which, as manifesting a genuine susceptibility for beautiful scenery, as well as being an admirable example of what we now call 'word-painting,' appears to me unrivalled in ancient literature.[3] I will read you a few sentences in which Basil describes his abode: 'A high mountain clothed with thick woods is watered towards the north by fresh and limpid streams. At its foot lies an extended plain rendered fruitful by the vapours descending from the mountain. The surrounding forest crowded with trees of different kinds incloses me as in a strong fortress. This wilderness is bounded by two deep ravines; on the one side the river rushing in from down the mountain forms an almost impassable barrier, whilst on the other all access is impeded by a broad mountain ridge. My hut is so situated on the summit of the mountain that I can overlook the whole plain, and follow throughout its course the Iris, which is more beautiful and has a more abundant body of water than the Strymon, near Amphipolis. The river of my wilderness, which is more impetuous than any other that I know of, breaks against the jutting rock, and throws itself foaming into the abyss below, an object of admiration to the mountain wanderer, and a source of profit to the natives from the

[1] See Dr. Zöckler, *Geschichte*, &c. p. 86

[2] Eng. trans. (Bohn), vol. ii. p. 393.

[3] Ep. xiv. *Opera omnia* (ed. Paris 1730), vol. iii. p. 93.

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numerous fishes found in its waters. Shall I describe to thee the fructifying vapours that rise from the moist earth, or the cool breezes wafted over the rippled face of the waters? Shall I speak of the sweet song of the birds, or of the rich luxuriance of the flowering plants?[1] What charms me beyond all else is the calm repose of this spot. It is only visited occasionally by huntsmen; for my wilderness nourishes herds of deer and wild goats, but not bears and wolves. What other spot would I exchange for this? Alcmæon, when he had found the Echinades, would not wander further.' We must allow that the feeling of the religious recluse is blended in this passage with a true sensibility to the beauties of nature, but the latter characteristic is so strongly marked as to make the extract very noteworthy. Humboldt has also adduced other evidences of nature enthusiasm from the two Gregories and Chrysostom, which tend to prove that among the Greek Fathers dogma-growth had not yet stifled the sensibility to beautiful scenery, and the passion for nature for her own sake and independently of all utilitarian considerations, which are the marks of refined and cultured minds.

But, as I have already intimated, this was by no means the favourite conception of patristic writers in general. With them nature was subordinated to dogma. Her instructions were predetermined by the foregone conclusions of Church councils and bishops. She had no independent standpoint as a teacher, and her lukewarm ecclesiastical suitors always seemed afraid lest her beauties, if conceded, might divert men's attention from her Creator, or rather from the Moloch representation of Him which it seemed the aim of Church-dogma to create and foster. Oftentimes no doubt she shared with Scripture the attribute of being one of the books by which God revealed His mind to men; but even this undoubted right was granted grudgingly, and with the tacit condition that nature, like all inferior servants, was required 'to know her place,' and on no account to contradict the utterances of her superior fellow-servant, Scripture. Of this distrustful disposition to nature Augustine is a notable example. His Manichæan training, superimposed on an intellect originally broad and many-sided, induced him to regard with favour both the sacred character of nature-teaching and its coequality with Scripture. Thus he maintains that men have two ways of attaining to the knowledge

[1] St. Basil, however, admits, what Humboldt's version of him does not notice, that these natural beauties would have more interest for others than they had for him.

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of God, 'creatura et Scriptura.' He terms the creatures the footsteps and signs of God, says that their different kinds are voices praising the Creator, and calls the collected universe a certain great book containing the nature of things. But with the advance of his sacerdotalism we discern the growth of a different spirit. Nature's equality or even proximate equality to Revelation is regarded with suspicion. The dualism implied in the unqualified juxtaposition of 'creatura et Scriptura' appears tainted with his own youthful heresy of Manichæanism, while an over-estimate of nature-teaching is one of the charges he presses against the Pelagians, and one of the causes he assigns for their heterodoxy.

During the dark ages, so called, the still small voice of nature was well-nigh drowned among the loud dissonances of the fall of the Roman Empire, the invasion of the Barbarians, and the political and social convulsions that followed these events. If we except those rare intellects both within and without the Church who resorted for their intellectual aliment to the yet unforgotten sources of Gentile wisdom, the true teaching of nature was either perverted or lost sight of. Magic, alchymy, and astrology became the chief forms of natural science. The inquirer into the laws of nature or the properties of natural objects was regarded as a pryer into forbidden secrets. Any knowledge he might acquire, *e.g.* into the medical properties of herbs was the accursed outcome of an alliance with the powers of darkness. The Church helped to diffuse and intensify this unworthy conception—(1) partly by an exclusive insistency on her own dogmatic teaching; (2) and still more by the direct inculcation of dogmas and superstitions precisely similar in kind to the vaunted wonders of the alchymist or magician. Hence in the darkest period of her history nature was only the armoury whence she drew without scruple or reserve her most potent weapons for the subjugation of her benighted followers. As the 'Ancilla Theologiæ'—deriving both status and name from her arrogant and narrow-minded mistress—nature was required to perform functions and subserve interests from which, had she been anything more than an impersonal abstraction, she must have instinctively recoiled.

With the general revival of learning that commenced in the ninth century came the gradual awakening of nature-studies. The two chief impulses, *inter alia*, that contributed to this were—(1) the researches of the Arabs into natural phenomena; (2) the influence of the study of Aristotle. Both of these are found united in Albert the Great. Of all mediæval theologians he contributed most to the revival of interest in nature which marked the Renaissance.

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This he effected both by his commentaries on Aristotle and the Arab teachers, especially Avicanna, and by his own investigations into natural phenomena. These researches were of a very elementary kind, but they sufficed to procure for him the fame of a magician. His general interest in these pursuits is attested by the catalogue of his voluminous works, nearly half of which bear on subjects directly or indirectly connected with natural history. Not the least of the services he thus rendered to the cause of genuine intellectual progress was his reassertion of the value of nature as a co-rival of Revelation, in teaching men their relation to God. His disciple Aquinas carries the sacredness and independence of nature a stage further; his work 'Contra Gentiles' being, to a considerable extent, an apology for the religion of nature. He repeatedly recommends the contemplation of the created universe as useful to the instruction of faith, and as inculcating of itself the wisdom, power, goodness, and other qualities of the Supreme Being. The law of nature he regards as common originally to all, though its utterances in certain cases have been obscured; but this partial recognition of the standpoint of Raymund of Sabieude is rendered nugatory by his opinion that the law of nature is abrogated by Christianity. But in truth, his opinions on this subject are no more consistent than they are on others. His doctrine of 'infused' and 'acquired knowledge,' the first being intuitional and Divine, the second experimental and natural, appears to me to involve the admission of double-truth. Still more decisively naturalistic, and hence in closer approximation to Raymund's position, is the theory of nature put forth by the celebrated Roger Bacon. He, I need not say, insists on personal investigation of nature by means of experiment, but even he subordinates her teaching to the supposed requirements of theology. Natural science is useful not for its own sake, but for the aid it affords to the higher sciences of the Church. His general tone on the subject is apologetic, though this is in my opinion less the result of his own will than the effect of external compulsion. He evinces a strong inclination to put nature in advance of theology, at least to accord her an independent scope; but the terrorism of dogma necessitates another arrangement, and nature is forced to confine herself to the ancillary offices usually assigned her. He indeed still further limits the significance of his nature-enthusiasm by making theology synonymous with Scripture, and pleading that every utterance of Scripture is necessarily infallible, though in relation to Romanism this anticipation of Protestantism has also its aspect of freedom.

Roger Bacon has often been regarded as a direct precursor of

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Raymund; but the latter is as much Bacon's superior in laying down the true relation of nature to theology as he is inferior to him in the inculcation of experimental research. In truth, Bacon's theory of the mutual position of nature and Revelation is the customary one which we have seen was adopted by the Church—we might term it 'the theory of the two books.' It is thus defined, *e.g.* by Erigena: 'In a twofold manner does the Divine light declare itself to the world, viz. by Scripture and creation. For in no other way is the Divine knowledge received in us unless by the prominent places of Holy Scripture and the different species of created beings.'[1] In a similar sense speaks Maximus the Confessor: 'Scripture and nature are like two books given us by God, which disclose the same single reason; the one by words and what is manifest, the other by insight and what is veiled. As a distinction is made in Scripture between the verbal clothing and the spirit, attention being directed especially to the latter, so also the forms and species of nature which we see are only garments which envelop those eternal grounds of reason by which all things are ruled.'[2]

This survey, necessarily brief, of the general position assigned to nature-teachings on the part of the Church, will enable us to estimate the higher value placed on them by Raymund in the Preface to his 'Natural Theology,' portions of which I now proceed to lay before you.

After the dedication of his work to the Trinity, Raymund proceeds:[3] 'Here follows the science of the book of the creatures, or the book of nature, the science also of man, which is proper to him as man, which is necessary, natural, and becoming to every man, by means of which he is enlightened to know himself and his Creator, and every duty to which as man he is bound.[4] It is moreover the science of the rule of nature by which every man learns all his natural obligations as well towards God as towards his neighbour. And not only will he be enlightened to know, but

[1] 'Dupliciter ergo lux æterna se ipsam mundo declarat, per Scripturam videlicet et creaturam, non enim aliter in nobis divina cognitio renovatur nisi per divinæ Scripturæ apices et creaturæ species.'—*Hom. in Prol. S. Ev. Joan.* *Opera* (Migne, *Patrol.* cxxii.), p. 289.

[2] Comp. Hüber, *Philosophie der Kirchenväter*, p. 344.

[3] *Le Christianisme de Montaigne*, p. 155.

[4] 'Per quam ipse illuminatur ad cognoscendum se ipsum et suum conditorem, et omne debitum ad quod homo tenetur.' Montaigne apparently thought the last phrase too unqualified, for he translates: 'et *presque* tout ce, à quoy il est tenu comme homme.'—Trans. ed. 1581, p. 1.

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by this science the volition will be moved and stimulated spontaneously and joyfully to desire and perform out of pure love. Nor is this all, but this science teaches every man to know truly, and without difficulty or labour, every truth needful to man both as regards his neighbour and his God, as well as all things necessary for man's salvation and perfection, and his attainment of eternal life. By the same science too a man learns without difficulty and truly whatever is contained in Holy Scripture, and whatever is commended and prescribed in Holy Scripture, and is able to solve every question it behoves him to know concerning God, as well as himself, &c.

'2. Further. By that science each man understands easily all the sacred doctors. Indeed, it is contained in their books, though not apparent, just as the alphabet is incorporated in all books. Whoever therefore wishes to understand all the doctors, and the whole of Holy Scripture, let him acquire that science which is the light of all sciences. Hence if you wish to be consolidated, well rooted, strengthened, and certain, learn first of all this science, otherwise you will be vacillating and uncertain, not having stability in yourself, because this is the root, origin, and foundation of all sciences necessary to man's salvation. Therefore he who hopes to be saved ought to have in himself that root, and whoso has that science has the foundation and source of all truth.

'3. Moreover, this science needs no other science or art. It does not presuppose grammar nor logic, nor any other of the liberal sciences or arts, neither physics nor metaphysics, because this is first and most needful to man, and orders all others to a good end and to the real truth and advantage of men; since this science teaches a man to know himself, and why he was made, and by whom he was made, what is his good and what his evil, what he ought to do, and to whom he is under obligation; and unless a man knows these things, what do other sciences profit? For all sciences are in reality vanities if this of self-knowledge be wanting. . . . This science is common to laymen as to clergy, and to every condition of men, and may be learnt within a month and without labour, nor is there need of learning anything by heart, nor to have any book or writing. It makes a man joyous, humble, kindly, obedient, to hate all sins and vices and to love virtue, nor does it inflate or render arrogant its possessor.

'4. Moreover, this science argues by infallible reasonings which no man can contradict, because it argues from premisses which are by experience most certain to every man—in other words, from all the creatures and from the nature of man himself.

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It also proves all things by man himself, and by those things which a man knows most certainly of himself by means of experience. Hence this science does not need other witness than those a man has in himself.

'5. This science at first seems very mean and of no value, because it begins with small things which every one despises, but in the end it issues in the most noble and infinite fruit, *i.e.* the knowledge of God and man. For so much the lowlier its origin, so much the higher does it mount to lofty and celestial things. Hence, whosoever would reap its fruit should exercise himself in the humble beginnings of this science, and not despise them, otherwise he will not attain the fruit. Because a boy, unless first well drilled in the knowledge of the alphabet, and of every letter by itself, cannot learn to read. Hence it should not seem difficult, because a man would learn more by this science in a month than by studying the doctors for a hundred years. Moreover, it does not allege any authority, not even that of Holy Scripture nor any of the doctors—on the contrary, it confirms Holy Scripture, and therefore, so far as we are concerned, is prior to it.

'6. For there are two books given us by God. The first is the book of the universe of creatures, or the book of nature, and the second is the book of Holy Scripture. The first book was given to man in the beginning, when the universe of things was established, because every creature is only a certain letter written by the finger of God, and from the many letters is composed the book of the creatures, just as an ordinary book is made up of the letters of the alphabet. In this book (of the universe) is also contained man, and he is the chief letter of that book. And just as the letters of the alphabet, and sentences composed of them, imply and include knowledge, and different meanings and wonderful opinions, so also the creatures, being similarly joined together and compared with each other, purport and signify various implications and opinions, and contain the science needful to man.

'7. The other book of Scripture, however, was given to man secondarily, and on account of the failure of the first book, for man at first knew not how to read it because he was blind. Nevertheless the first book of the creatures is common to all, but the book of Scripture is not common to all, because only the clergy know how to read it.

'8. Moreover, the first book, that is of nature, cannot be falsified, nor erased, nor wrongly interpreted: hence heretics cannot understand it erroneously, nor can any man with regard to

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it become heretical; but the second may be falsified and misconstrued and ill-understood. Yet each book comes from the same author, since the same God both established the creatures and revealed Holy Scripture. Hence they agree among themselves, and one does not contradict the other, but for all that it is the first that is con-natural to us, the other being supernatural. Moreover, since man is by nature a thinking being, capable of learning and knowledge; and since by his natural creation he actually possesses no learning nor knowledge, though capable of acquiring them; and since he cannot have learning and science without the book wherein they are written; it was most necessary, in order that he might not have the capacity of learning and knowledge in vain, that Divine wisdom should create for him a book in which of himself, and without a master, he might study needful doctrine. For this reason God created for him the whole of this visible world, and gave it him as his own natural and infallible book, written with the finger of God—single creatures being its letters—to demonstrate to man, by the aid of Divine, not of human, judgment, the wisdom and knowledge necessary to his salvation.

'But no man is able to discern this wisdom, nor to read by himself in the said book, which is always open, unless he is enlightened and purified from original blindness. Hence none of the ancient philosophers were able to read that science, because they were blind so far as their own salvation was concerned, though they derived some knowledge—indeed all they possessed—from that very book; but the true wisdom that leads to life eternal, although within it, they could not read.

'9. This science, lastly, is nothing else but thinking and recognising the wisdom written in the creatures, to extract it from them, to lodge it in the mind, and to ascertain the meaning of creation. Thus by comparing one creature with another, and combining them like different sentences, a man may attain the final opinion and the meaning respecting them, for every man has it in his power to understand and obtain knowledge.'

Such is the remarkable preface (with a few unimportant omissions) to Raymund's 'Natural Theology.' I have translated it as literally as possible, to give you some notion of its artless unformed style, full as it is of parentheses, repetitions, redundancies, and literary blemishes of every kind save one, *i.e.* obscurity; for Raymund's meaning is pretty clear, and it is just this that makes the preface so noteworthy. As a half-suppressed indictment of the past and an anticipation of future time, or as an outspoken manifesto of the claims of nature-teaching in an age

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when theology and its methods asserted an exclusive right to be heard, no more important utterances were delivered in the first half of the fifteenth century.

Its chief feature in relation to the past is its antagonism to Scholasticism. From the heavy tomes, the involved methods, the trivial disputes of the Schoolmen, Raymund appeals to nature and her teachings. More can be learned by a brief study of 'the creatures' than from centuries poring over the doctors and Fathers of the Church; while hardly less marked is his implied protest against ecclesiasticism and its exclusiveness. He especially eulogizes nature as being an open book, contrasting it in this respect to Scripture, which was confined to those able to read, *i.e.* the clergy. Hence nature was the Bible of the laity, adapted not for one but for all classes of men alike. A similar advantage consisted in its being con-natural instead of supernatural. We also trace in Raymund's preface a repugnance to external authority as a source of truth. He lays almost as much stress as Sokrates on self-knowledge, and the direct utterances of the human conscience and reason. According to Raymund man is the microcosm from which the whole macrocosm of theology is evolved. From himself, from the laws of his being, from his external surroundings, he may derive all the knowledge really necessary to his salvation. His preface is also a much-needed protest against the complicated and difficult forms of dogma-growth, and a plea for simplicity. He is never weary of insisting on this, which he deems a prime characteristic of nature-teaching, that it can be acquired 'within a month,' though one would gladly learn in what this month's tuition consisted, unless it were a diligent reading of the 'Theologia Naturalis.' It is also a distinguishing feature of the mediævalism, of the breaking up of which Raymund's work is a distinct symptom, that all nature-studies were held in contempt, and this is marked by the apologetic tone in which Raymund pleads for the new study. He almost seems to share the disdain of ecclesiasticism for the lower orders of the creatures, and consoles himself by the reflection that investigation into them leads ultimately to the highest knowledge.

But if Raymund's preface thus possesses a profound significance as to the past of mediævalism, its implication with regard to the future of modern science is not less important.

Reading it, we might almost suppose ourselves transported from the first half of the fifteenth to the latter half of the nineteenth century. That the creation is the primary and perfect reflex of the Divine mind is as distinctly maintained as by a modern

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scientific theologian. That its knowledge is an illumination to man, and sufficient to teach him all duties both to his Creator and himself, is asserted as boldly as by Helvetius or Jean-Jacques. That all truths necessary to human salvation are revealed by it, is affirmed as explicitly as by an English Deist. That it is the alphabet, the alone source of truth and existence and light to all other sciences, that its arguments are infallible because they appeal to experience, that a man may learn more from it in a month than by studying learned doctors for a hundred years—all these oft-repeated assertions of the physical philosophy of our own day are laid down in the preface to the 'Theologia Naturalis.' No wonder that it has been compared to Kant's 'Religion within the bounds of Pure Reason' and to Locke's 'Essay on the Reasonableness of Christianity,' or that it speedily obtained the honour of being placed on the 'Index Expurgatorius!'[1]

Nor is the relation of this first science of nature to the Bible as laid down by Raymund less remarkable. As you observe he does not hesitate to affirm the superiority of the book of nature to Holy Writ,[2] and assigns reasons for this estimate which, if

[1] The Preface was placed on the Index under Clement VIII.

[2] Compare, on this subject, O. Zöckler, *Theologia Naturalis*, i. pp. 18–36. The peculiarity of Raymund's position is that he makes nature *the First Book*. Roth has apparently forgotten this fact when he chooses, as a motto for his study of Raymund, an adaptation by Herder of Campanella's sonnet beginning—

'Il mondo è il libro, dove il senno eterno
Scrisse i proprii concetti, &c.'

'Die Welt, das *zweite* Buch, darinnen ewiger
Verstand selbst eigene Gedanken schrieb
Ist der lebend'ge Spiegel, welcher uns
Das Antlitz Gottes im Reflexe zeigt.'

Moreover, Raymund does not limit the use of the Book of Nature, after the usual and more orthodox manner, to the Gentiles. In this respect his view forms a pleasing contrast to that of another Skeptic, Cornelius Agrippa, who thus determines the evidential object of nature, 'Primum librum creaturarum propositum gentibus qui sub lege naturæ vivebant, qui habuerunt philosophos doctos per sensibiles creaturas cognoveruntque Deum per illas, quemadmodum inquit Paulus "Invisibilia Dei per ea quæ facta sunt intellectu conspiciuntur."' (C. Agrippa, *De Triplici Ratione cognoscendi Deum*, *Op. om.* ii. p. 482.) More in harmony with Raymund's view of nature being the *First Book* is the opinion of a liberal English divine: 'God hath set up two lights to enlighten us in our way, the light of reason, which is the light of His creation, and the light of Scripture, which is *after-revelation* from Him.' (Whichcote's *Aphorisms*, cent. ii. 109.) Lord Bacon also considers the Book of Nature the key to Holy Scripture. *De Aug. Sci. Works* (Ellis & Spedding), vol. i. p. 469.

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advanced in a modern pulpit or periodical, would undoubtedly be stigmatized as Skeptical and profane. He says: 1. That nature excels Holy Scripture both in priority and importance, and is the source of its confirmation to us. 2. That Holy Scripture was given to man because of his deterioration and blindness, which made him unable to peruse the book of nature, and is therefore a supplementary revelation imparted, not on account of any inherent defect in the first, but because of the corruption of those for whom it was designed. 3. That the book of nature is superior, because it is common to all, while the Bible is reserved for the clergy. 4. That the book of nature cannot be falsified, nor destroyed, nor wrongly interpreted, and therefore it can have no heretics, whereas Holy Scripture is perpetually liable to falsification and misunderstanding. These statements, which so closely resemble the speculations of our modern science teachers, are probably unsurpassed for audacity by any Christian writer of the Middle Ages. How far they justify the opinion that Raymund was an avowed Skeptic may perhaps be doubted. That they tend to prove him a rationalist [1] and unconscious Skeptic must, I think, be manifest to all. The expression of submission to the authority of the Church, with which he concludes his preface, cannot be held to prove much either way as to the sincerity of his orthodoxy. It is the ordinary stereotyped formula which the Church exacted of all literary productions in the Middle Ages, and is affixed to works of whose questionable and heterodox tendencies there can be no doubt. The stress she herself attached to such a declaration is shown in this case by the fact that it did not prevent the prohibition of Raymund's preface.[2]

But before we leave the preface, I must call your attention to its most remarkable feature as an outcome of Free-thought—I mean the full recognition of the claims of the Book of Nature on mankind. We have already noticed the inevitable tendency on the

[1] A not unfair estimate of Raymund, from the Roman Catholic point of view, is given by Stöckl, in his *Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, ii. 2, p. 1055, &c. After stating that Raymund derived his method from Raymund Lull, he adds, 'Sie ist keineswegs die christliche, sie ist vielmehr wesentlich rationalistisch.' Nor is Dr. Stöckl blinded by Raymund's defence of the dogmas of the Church. Cf. pp. 1057–78.

[2] The works of Jerome Cardan, Vanini, Telesius, and Patritius, *e.g.* were generally accompanied by the author' declaration of attachment and submission to the Romish Church, but thi circumstance does not seem to have fettered their own freedom of speculation, and certainly did not prevent the customary proscriptions and anathemas on the part of the Church. Cf. Erdmann, *Grundriss*, i. p. 530.

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part of every special revelation to lessen and if possible to nullify the claims of all general or ordinary methods of obtaining Divine knowledge, and consequently the antagonism which must always exist between the religion of nature and any revelation which claims to be supernatural. Hence the Book of Nature has always occupied a more or less subordinate position in all the great religions of the world. Buddhism despises nature and tramples it under foot; Judaism, in its later phases, has recognised it, but by no means admits it to a footing of equality; Mahommedanism ignores it; Christianity has for the most part patronized it as a corroborative but altogether subsidiary proof of its own truth. Raymund is the first Christian writer who not only vindicates the right of the Book of Nature to an equality with Holy Writ, but who asserts the superiority in many respects of the former over the latter. According to Raymund, the Bible is only true so far as its utterances agree with and are confirmed by the higher testimony of nature. I will not dwell further on this point, except only to suggest whether the progress of modern thought on this question does not point with increasing emphasis in the direction thus indicated by Raymund of Sabieude.

The objection has frequently been made that the promise of the preface is belied by the treatise following it, that on a novel heterodox basis Raymund has erected a commonplace orthodox superstructure. We shall presently see what foundation there is for such a statement; which, even supposing it well-grounded, appears to me very ungenerous. Truth does not come to men like the sunrise in the tropics, showing herself at once in her full glory without any interval of mist or twilight. Her first illumination consists generally of a few straggling rays, striving to appear through the dark clouds of prejudice and error which necessarily attend her rising. Few systems of religious philosophy, if exposed to unfettered criticism, would yield more grains of truth than Raymund's 'Natural Theology;' and we may surely consider it enough for the digestive powers of the fifteenth century to have had the claims of natural science, as well as the analogy between natural and revealed religion, so distinctly placed before it that most of Raymund's successors in the same inquiry have, whether knowingly or not, followed in his footsteps.

Turning now to the main treatise, we have to remember that Raymund inherited the thoughts of some of the noblest intellects among the Schoolmen, as well as the Arabic philosophers of his own native land, with whose works his own medical education must inevitably have brought him acquainted. It is quite impos-

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sible to ascertain from his own confession the name of any especial teacher who has influenced his opinions, for it is a peculiar feature in his work that from beginning to end no authority is cited, no quotation formally made; even texts of Scripture are used without any indication of their origin. The energy and acuteness of German scholars in this species of literary handicraft have determined that among Raymund's authorities are comprised most of the great leaders of Christian thought prior to his own age. Among those whose opinions have been found in his treatise may be cited the Neo-Platonists, St. Augustine, Dionysius the Areopagite, Scotus Erigena, Duns Scotus, Albertus Magnus, Abelard, Aquinas, Ockam, Roger Bacon, Raymund Lull, and Gerson; but the historians and German monographists differ so much in assigning to these names their respective influence in the formation of Raymund's opinions that we must leave the question unsolved. And yet (as I have already remarked in our discussion), if I might be allowed a suggestion on this matter, I should be inclined to think that Raymund's inspiration may have been derived from an Arab source, at least so far as the main idea of his work is concerned. A very remarkable book was written by a Spanish-Arab philosopher about the year 1180, in order to show that the main doctrines of Islamism are capable of being discovered and proved by purely natural means, without the aid of any teacher or revelation of whatever kind. The hypothesis is not unreasonable, that Raymund thence adopted the similar argument which he employs to prove the truth of Christian doctrines. But, however this may be, it seems certain that his adoption of the thoughts of others was merely by way of suggestion, and that he thoroughly assimilated and made them a coherent and indivisible portion of his own mental structure.

The book begins with a discussion on the different orders of existing beings found in creation. These he determines to be four, viz. (1) being; (2) life; (3) feeling; and (4) intelligence; the fourth also including free-will.[1] From these different grades or orders of being, Raymund infers the existence of Deity, by the ascending process which is customarily employed for this purpose by metaphysical theologians. Hence he identifies the Divine existence with abstract being, and makes it comprehend all other modes of existence. The reference which his commentator, Roth, makes to the similar conclusions of Hegel is sufficiently obvious. In fact,

[1] A similar classification is to be found in Aristotle, Dionysius the Areopagite, Albertus Magnus, and Thomas Aquinas. Averroes makes it the starting-point of his natural-history researches, whence it has received the designation of 'the ladder of Averroes.'

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in this portion of his work Raymund is a thorough-going Pantheist. He not only makes the being of God inclusive of all other existences whatsoever, but says that every being includes God. Nor is he afraid to carry out this idea into its extreme logical consequences, for he proceeds to say that 'the being of God includes or possesses in itself the being of land, of water, of air, and of fire; and the being of all the four grades and of all things included in those grades, for no being can be devoid of God, and hence the being of God is the universality of all things.[1] It is probable that most of his historians and commentators have derived the idea that Raymund was a realist from this portion of his work. His realism was in truth a corollary from his Pantheism. Hence, after asserting that the being of God includes the being of all other things, he is compelled, in order to prevent the Deity from being degraded into a fetish, to add that the being of those things is double, one in their own proper nature which we see, the other in the being of God which we cannot see. He compares the latter to the plan of an unbuilt house existing in the mind of the architect.[2] This argument is repeated more than once, so that there can be little doubt of the realism of Raymund. If on a subsequent occasion he denies that universals can have any existence outside the mind, and thereby renders himself amenable to the charge of nominalism,[3] we must accept the inconsistency as an example of the dualism, which, besides being a characteristic of the time, is an essential feature of his own intellect, and justifies his position among unconscious Skeptics. No one can read this earlier portion of the 'Theologia Naturalis' without being convinced of Raymund's metaphysical power. As might have been expected from his Platonic principles, he indulges in speculations as to the existence, &c., of all things in God, which remind us of Malebranche and Berkeley.

The doctrine of the Trinity Raymund expounds in accordance with the mode adopted by Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, and which has been revived in our own day by Hegel. He says that

[1] 'Et per consequens sequitur, quod esse Dei habet in se esse terræ, esse aquæ, aëris et ignis, et esse omnium quatuor graduum, et omnium quæ continentur in ipsis gradibus, quia nullum esse Dei deficit. Et ideo esse Dei est universale omnium.'—*Theol. Nat.* p. 21, Tit. xiv.

[2] This illustration is employed for nominalistic purposes by Ockam. Indeed, there are not a few phrases and arguments in the *Natural Theology* which suggest both an acquaintance and appreciation of Ockam's writings.

[3] *Theol. Nat.* p. 331. Erdmann seems to have been the first among the historians of philosophy to call attention to Raymund's nominalism. *Grundriss*, i. p. 438.

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the Father produced the Son 'intelligendo suum esse, et suam substantiam;' a mode which, if it savours of Sabellianism, is, in my opinion, greatly superior to the crude tritheism of some of our contemporary divines. Indeed, he lays especial stress on the unity of the Deity, and affirms its simplicity in such terms as to jeopardize the Trinity of Persons. He employs a curious illustration in order to represent the mutual relation of Father and Son: 'As in an active and passive verb there is an intellectual relation, so is there in the Father and Son, because the Father by understanding produced the Son, just as an active verb by virtue of the intellect produced of necessity a passive verb.'[1] It must be observed that throughout the whole of this discussion on the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Church, no appeal is made or even suggested to any extrinsic authority whether ecclesiastical or scriptural. The dicta of popes and councils are as thoroughly ignored as they could have been by the most ardent of Protestants. Raymund's appeal is to what he conceives to be natural, self-evident, rationalistic, and utilitarian principles. Thus he expressly approves of the doctrine of the Trinity, because he believes it to be consonant with reason, inasmuch as it harmonizes with the construction of the world; and because it plainly has for its object the good of man. So far indeed does he carry this last argument of expediency that he makes it the source of most of the doctrines of the Christian Church. He proposes as a final test of truth—a rule and method of affirmation or denial—the question which of the various conclusions proposed is *best for man*. Apparently accepting as an ultimate fact the intention of nature to afford men pleasure rather than pain, he says that a man should affirm the truth of that particular conclusion which is most worthy of his love and desire, and pronounce false that which is hurtful or hateful.[2] Indeed, he maintains that a man is justified in believing what is false provided it is to his own benefit and utility,[3] a prin-

[1] 'Et sicut in verbo activo et passivo est comparatio intellectualis ita est in Patre et Filio, quia Pater intelligendo produxit Filium, sicut verbum activum per virtutem intellectus produxit verbum passivum de necessitate.' —*Theol. Nat.* Tit. liv. p. 69.

[2] 'Quod debet (homo) affirmare illam partem tanquam veram, quæ magis est amabilis, desiderabilis de se, et de sua natura, et quæ magis habet de esse, et de bono, et aliam partem oppositam tenetur negare tanquam falsam, et a se fugare tanquam inimicam sibi.'—*Theol. Nat.* Tit. lxvii. p. 91.

[3] 'Et si aliquis dicat, quare tu affirmas et credis illud quod non intelligis quia forsitan est falsum? ad hoc respondetur quod excusatur per hoc, quia credit ad suum bonum, et ad suam utilitatem,' &c. (*Theol. Nat.*

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ciple, it may be added, by no means rare among men, but not often so frankly avowed. In accordance with this somewhat Epikourean doctrine, Raymund seeks to prove that it is for the real benefit of men that they should believe that God exists, that God is and can be only one, that He is omnipotent, wise, and good. Similarly it is best for man (*melius est homini*—a phrase which occurs with noteworthy frequency in this part of his book) that he should believe in the creation of the world out of nothing, in the Incarnation, and, in short, in most of the great doctrines of the Christian faith. Those who think that the utilitarian argument is necessarily opposed to religious faith may learn something from a study of Raymund's 'Natural Theology:' they will perceive that the 'greatest happiness' principle is not so incompatible with the doctrines of Christianity as some have thought. At the same time I must confess that the arguments employed on this head are often more ingenious than convincing.

We are necessarily ignorant of Raymund's personal character, but estimating it from his writings I should be inclined to ascribe to him a singularly happy and contented position. Dr. Pangloss can scarce rival him in the persistent affirmation that 'whatever is, is best.' Human life, according to Raymund, is a beauteous and lovely existence,[1] all other terrene existences being expressly contrived and adapted for it. Although the possibility of human sin is incidentally touched upon, yet Raymund, like Spinoza, merges individual evil in the general good.[2] His words recall Pope's lines:—

> God sends not ill if rightly understood,
> Or partial ill is universal good.

He is not, however, quite consistent in his maintenance of this view, for when he comes to deal with ecclesiastical dogmas he ascribes to human sin a sufficiently vigorous and independent existence of its own.

The crowning glory of man, according to Raymund, is his free-will. By this, as he excels all inferior creatures, so he is made a very portion of Deity. The language in which he points out the many excellences of free-will, calling it the ruler of all nature, and, speaking of it as a substantive, self-existing entity, occasionally

p. 91.) Lower down (p. 101) Raymund applies this principle as Pascal afterwards did, to belief in Christianity, saying that if it were false a man would be excused for believing in it as being what is best and most lovable.

[1] 'Pulchrum et formosum esse.'

[2] 'Et quamvis permittat (Deus) fieri malum, tamen nunquam relinquit illud inordinatum, sed ordinat illud malum in bonum.'—*Theol. Nat.* p. 47.

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reminds one of Schopenhauer's 'Die Welt als Wille und als Vorstellung.' 'Behold!' he exclaims, 'the wondrous rule of nature: free-will is king.'[1] Of course this extravagant and somewhat dangerous outburst is only due to a momentary enthusiasm. Further on we find free-will placed in due submission to the Deity, though otherwise dominating over and controlling the whole of creation.

Of Raymund's mysticism all his commentators have taken notice. The literary sources whence he drew his inspiration is in this as in other respects uncertain; but if the same arguments couched in precisely similar language may be taken as a proof of indebtedness, his obligations to Gerson appear to be well founded. Beginning with the love of God to all His creatures, proofs of which he discovers in every part of creation, he proceeds to the reciprocal obligation of man to love God, and all created beings as partaking of God. The terms which Raymund employs to depict the manifold excellences of love have all the fervid glow of developed mysticism, but still a mysticism sober, rational, and self-contained, not the wild incoherent raving of ecstatic passion which the word is sometimes taken to imply. The climax of his mystic extravagance may perhaps be found in his doctrine that men, by loving God, are themselves transformed into gods by love.[2] The extreme opposite of this love to God is naturally self-love, which Raymund makes the source of all human sin and misery, displaying in this part of his argument no inconsiderable amount of shrewdness and insight into the recesses of human nature. It is a noteworthy fact, as illustrating Raymund's method, that from the existence of these antagonistic emotions, love of God and self-love, he infers the necessity of two rival centres or abodes for them, *i.e.* heaven and hell. Men, through the love of God, ascend to heaven; by self-love they descend to hell. This reasoning is enforced with genuine eloquence and not a little hortatory power. Some of his arguments here, as elsewhere, may appear to us more curious than cogent; for instance, he gravely maintains that the love of God being light must ascend, whereas self-love being heavy must descend. But we must remember that such an argument was by no means ineffective in an age when magic and occult science were in their prime, and when material and spiritual existences and

[1] 'Ecce mirabile regimen naturæ: liberum arbitrium est rex,' and in a few sentences before he terms it 'Imperatorem et Regem totius naturæ.' —*Theol. Nat.* p. 134.

[2] 'Patet ergo, quomodo homo per amorem potest Deo correspondere, et ei assimilari, quod nulla creatura Dei habet alia, Maxima ergo est et dignissima res amor quia facit hominem Deo similem.'—*Theol. Nat.* p. 150.

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qualities were so intermingled that facts and reasonings derived from one were conceived to be unreservedly applicable to the other.

As love, according to Raymund, is the crowning-point of a man's religious duty to God, so is it the mainspring and motive of his obligations to man. Nay, man being the living image of God, love to his fellows is a necessary result of love to God. It is the limitation of love to the individual that renders it evil, whereas its extension and diffusion makes it good. For these reasons a man can render to himself love only as being part of God. On this somewhat mystical basis, Raymund, without any further allusion to it, or noticing the source whence it comes, places the golden rule of the Saviour: 'Because every man is compelled to love himself by the fact that and so far as he is man, and the living image of God, it follows that every man is bound to love every other man as himself,'[1] which is moreover a remarkable illustration of Raymund's methods of deducing his conclusions from natural self-evident considerations, rather than from external authoritative principles. By similar reasonings he enforces the duty of love and sympathy for the lower orders of creation. Hence the whole created universe, from the Creator to the lowest creature, are knit together by this universal chain and obligation of love. 'Behold the wondrous order!' he exclaims, with one of his bursts of enthusiasm. God first loved and continues to love men, and the creatures continually manifest that love by serving man, and so God draws men to Himself by perpetual love and obligation, and, being drawn by love, men ought first to love God, and then they are bound continually to the mutual love of each other.'[2] Nor is

[1] 'Et quia omnis homo obligatur amare seipsum, eo et inquantum est homo et imago Dei viva . . . sequitur quod omnis homo tenetur amare omnem alterum hominem sicut seipsum' (p. 164). Raymund's curiously indirect manner of using well-known passages from the Scripture is shown a few sentences lower down, where he is speaking of the relation of love to men to love to God, he says the second obligation arises out of the first (Et secundum ligamen oritur a primo), in which words we have probably an unconscious reproduction of our Lord's 'And the second is like unto it.'

[2] 'Et sic creaturæ ligantur cum homine serviendo ei, et homines ligantur cum Deo eum amando, et per consequens tunc homines colligantur inter se, amando se ad invicem . . . Et sic per ordinem universum debet esse colligatum. Ecce mirabilem ordinem: Deus dilexit primo, et continue diligit homines, et creaturæ manifestant continue istam dilectionem serviendo hominibus: et sic Deus trahit ad se homines amando et obligando continue, et per amorem tracti debent amare Deum primo, et exinde obligati sunt se invicem amare continue.'—*Theol. Nat.* cxxiii. pp. 165, 166.

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Raymund satisfied with establishing the need and obligation of the feeling as such: he considers that even the love which a man owes to God should overflow and revert to the utility and benefit of man, and hence by so much the more a man's obligation to God is multiplied and increased, by so much is also increased the sum total of the pleasure and advantage of the human race.[1]

Closely connected with Raymund's doctrine of love is his view of sin and its punishment. From love to God proceeds pleasure; from self-love can only come pain. Hence he conceives the soul makes for itself its own torment, which torment, he says, will of necessity be mental and spiritual, and exceed beyond comparison all bodily suffering. A close analysis is not needed to discern a discrepancy between Raymund's Eudæmonism and his opinions on future punishment, but we must remember that he infers its existence from principles already laid down as inherent in the creation. Hence he deduces the need of Divine punishment from the existence of free-will; and the will of man as part of the Divine will being immortal, its punishment when evil must be eternal as well. What the will of God is, he thinks, is manifested to us by the order of creation. The terms in which he lays down this truth are so illustrative of his system and his style and method of argument that I must trouble you with his own short account of it.[2] 'What the will of God is, the creatures and their order make manifest to us; for whatsoever created beings notify and say to us is altogether according to the will of God, and this God wishes, this He asserts; because all created things are arranged according to the will of God. Therefore when created beings say or signify anything to us, this is according to His will; because nothing in creation is ordained contrary to the will of God. And inasmuch as whatsoever is concluded in that book is deduced from created things themselves, and from their order and comparison, therefore whatsoever is concluded in that book is according to the will of God. Hence he who acts contrary to the things written in that book (of nature) acts against the will of God; and he who does them, does the will of God.' On our mode of acquiring that knowledge of God which is contained in the works of nature Raymund dwells at some length: God and His attributes are inferrible by and from human experience.[3] This, he says, is truly

[1] *Theol. Nat.* Tit. cxxiv.

[2] Tit. clxvi. p. 231.

[3] 'Et iste est ultimus gradus cognitionis per experientiam; et iste est certissimus, solidissimus et firmissimus, qui semper manet, et ibi est complementum cognitionis.'— *Theol. Nat.* Tit. cxciv. p. 275.

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to know God, for the knowledge which comes of experience is superior to the knowledge derived from other sources, *e.g.* human testimony. The existence and diversity of the Divine attributes Raymund explains by the transference to Deity of the different moods and feelings produced by the works of nature on the human soul.[1]

Raymund now passes on to the second or supplementary volume of Divine revelation, *i.e.* Holy Scripture. In harmony with his whole method, the truth of Jesus Christ being the Son of God is not concluded from Revelation—he infers it rather from natural probabilities. Just as there will be an agreement between a man's words and his actions, so the Divine words cannot be inconsistent with the Divine works, but the words of God are still to be interpreted by His works,[2] Holy Scripture is to be explained by natural science. Suppose the question had arisen in Raymund's days as to any disagreement between the deliverances of the two records, I have no doubt he would have given his unbiassed preference to the Book of Nature, as being the earlier, simpler, and more universal revelation. The general drift of his argument plainly points in this direction. At the same time we must admit that when he arrives to the question of the Bible as the basis of the dogmas of the Church, his testimony on behalf of nature becomes more uncertain and hesitating. Most of his commentators agree that in the latter half of his work the courage of the author, the breadth of his views, the directness of his purpose, exhibit a sad falling off. No doubt it is only what might have been expected from the circumstances of the case. Tennemann has well remarked that had Raymund adhered to the plan of which the preface gives an outline he would have produced an epoch-making work. The wonder is that, pursuing an entirely new path, and one beset by so many difficulties and dangers, he should have followed it so far as he did. Accordingly we find that the superiority ascribed in the preface and in some portions of the treatise to the book of nature is now modified. It is true he

[1] 'Et ideo sequitur quod secundum quod Deus multis modis operatur circa ipsum hominem, secundum hoc homo diversimode nominat Deum.'—*Theol. Nat.* p. 276.

[2] A similar view of the creation, *i.e.* conceiving it as the realization or materialization of the Divine λόγος, was rarely lost sight of by the more profound of the Fathers and Schoolmen: so Aquinas says, 'Creaturæ sunt quasi voces exprimentes unum Verbum Divinum' (*Sent.* i. dist. xxvii. qu. 2). A similar thought forms the basis of Giordano Bruno's philosophy. Its logical outcome is, of course, some form of Pantheism.

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does not utterly relinquish it, for he still insists that the words of God are to be interpreted by His works, that the former are more easily recognised than the latter, and therefore ought to be learned first;[1] but in other respects he maintains the superiority of the written Revelation. Among the arguments employed for this purpose are the following: 1. The word of God excels His works, because the latter were made out of nothing, whereas the former proceeded from the mouth of God. The creatures themselves were made by the word of God: the latter therefore is superior. Creatures were made for the body and its requirements, whereas God's word was meant for the soul and its wants.[2] As he proceeds further in the dogmatic portion of his work his preference for the book of Scripture becomes still more unreserved and emphatic, until finally not even Luther can express himself more warmly as to the supreme perfection of the Bible. 'Further,' he says, 'it must be concluded of the book because it is of God, and it is God that speaks, that nothing in it can be false, nothing useless, nothing superfluous, nothing weak; hence nothing in it is to be condemned, nothing rejected, nothing deemed wrong.' And here I must observe, as another instance of Raymund's originality and mental independence, that in all his arguments on the Scriptures he accepts and maintains the ordinary Protestant standpoint. The Bible is with him supreme over the Church, not its vassal and servant; and yet in treating of the dogmas of the Church, which he does in Part V. of his work, he does not attempt to place them on the authority of the book, as we might have expected; for example, when speaking of the Fall of man there is not the slightest reference to the narrative in Genesis, and no allusion to St. Paul's epistles. That man has fallen is grounded on the fact that there is a continual conflict between human duty and human conduct. That he must have been created perfect is proved because the contrary supposition would be detrimental to God's honour and glory; and as the lower orders were created perfect, *à fortiori* must man have been so created. That it was the first man who committed the first offence against God is grounded on the universality of human ills and miseries. That he was tempted is deduced from the fact of his

[1] 'Sed verba Dei, si aliqua sunt in mundo, non sunt omnibus manifesta; et ideo per cognitionem creaturarum seu operum Dei tanquam per primo nota et magis manifesta, debemus ire ad cognitionem verborum Dei tanquam ad minus nota; ita quod ipsa facta et ipsæ creaturæ Dei ducent nos ad verba Dei.'—*Theol. Nat.* p. 307.

[2] *Theol. Nat.* p. 325.

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original state of blessedness. In a word, his reasoning proceeds as usual on a logical and independent basis, and without—in appearance at least—any deference to an outward superimposed authority, whether literary or ecclesiastical.

I need not, I think, follow Raymund through the remaining portion of his work, in which he treats one by one most of the great dogmas of the Church. Although in terms he asserts the truth and perfection of the Bible, and somewhat less explicitly affirms also the truth of the Church and its Head, yet there is no attempt to make the doctrine he discusses depend either on one authority or the other. They are grounded, as usual, on such premisses as the nature of God, the constitution of the world, the needs and faculties of man, the reasonable fitness of things, connection of cause and effect, analogy between nature and Revelation. That his methods of reasoning are sometimes unsound, or that his analogies are occasionally pushed to grotesque and unseemly excesses, can surprise no one who reflects on the enterprise in which Raymund was engaged or the time in which he lived. We have, for instance, a very curious argument on the supposed necessity of the birth of a Saviour from a virgin.[1] Similarly the possibility of the two natures, human and Divine, being united in one person without any change of either is proved by a very grotesque piece of reasoning derived from the five vowels A E I O U. Equally conclusive is his argument of what he calls the sacramental scale, which is thus explained: 'As by the ladder of nature, which consists of visible things, man ascends to the knowledge of spiritual and invisible things, so has the Lord appointed to fallen man a certain scale in his restoration, so that by corporal and visible things a man might know things spiritual and invisible.'[2] Indeed, it is in his treatment of the sacraments that Raymund's taste for false analogies and similitudes attains what I must be permitted to call its climax of absurdity. He thinks, *e.g.* that the coldness of the water in baptism typifies the cooling down of concupiscence in the person baptized. The admixture of oil in the same sacrament, as it renders the water tasteful and sapid, so it signifies that the grace given in the sacrament gives a man a greater flavour in Christ, and renders him more acceptable and tasteful to other men in his fame and conversation. Occasionally, however, these analogies, even when superficial, are not devoid of a certain ingenuity; for instance, he illustrates the omnipresence of Christ's body in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper by com-

[1] *Theol. Nat.* p. 424. [2] *Ibid.* pp. 488, 492.

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paring it to a single voice sounding at the same time in many ears, and to the breaking of a mirror, each broken fragment giving a reflected likeness of him who looks into it. I am aware that there is nothing absolutely new or strange in these similitudes; in the symbolical and liturgical writings of the Romish Church the quaintest and most grotesque analogy of Raymund would no doubt pale into utter insignificance. The curious matter is that they should be found in combination with the rationalistic tendency and the keen perception of legitimate analogy which is indicated by the preface and other portions of his work.

It is time to sum up my subject. Raymund of Sabieude is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable characters of the Middle Ages, and his 'Natural Theology,' though very unequal in parts, is as a whole a wonderful phenomenon. No one who has carefully studied the work can help admitting the essentially modern spirit which characterizes portions of it, the comprehensiveness of its scope, the independence of thought and method which pervades it.

The question has been asked, and it is one which naturally suggests itself—Why is it that a work so original, powerful, and thought-provoking as Raymund's did not produce a greater effect on his contemporaries? Montaigne informs us that until he translated it, it was almost wholly unknown. Assuming it to have been written in or about 1436, and first printed in 1484, this would leave an interval of some years until the appearance of Montaigne's translation in 1569, during which it must have slumbered quietly on the library shelves of a few Spanish and French monasteries, or formed part of the hoarded treasure of some of the advanced thinkers of that time, such as Pierre de Bunel, who introduced it to the notice of Montaigne's father. The researches of modern bibliography seem to me to render questionable Montaigne's statement of the small renown acquired by Raymund's work. Roth enumerates twelve MSS. and as many early printed editions of the original work prior to Montaigne's French translation,[1] and a careful examination of every large collection of mediæval MSS. would probably result in the discovery of many more. But however this may be, it seems certain that towards the latter part of the sixteenth century Raymund's work became popular,[2] and that it was this popularity

[1] See Roth's dissertation as above.

[2] In addition to Montaigne's evidence on this point (see bk. ii. ch. xii.), where the work is said to have become popular, especially among ladies, we have the evidence of the different writers mentioned by Bayle in his

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that procured the prohibition of the preface by the Church of Rome.[1] In the gradual awakening now beginning to take place in Europe, and which was soon to culminate in the secular Renaissance and religious reformation, I should myself be inclined to award a high place to the influence which the 'Natural Theology' could not fail to exercise.[2]

As to Raymund's title to a place among Skeptics, I must admit that his chief characteristics are intellectual independence, belief in the supremacy of reason and Free-thought, and, so far as I am able to judge, a decided disbelief in the methods and reasonings of the theology of his day. He also manifests distinct indications of the dualistic mode of thought which we have already considered. He is at once a realist and a nominalist; a Pantheist and a believer in a personal Deity; a rationalist and a defender of extreme ecclesiastical dogmas. But besides his Skepticism, he has other claims on our interest. He may almost be termed a pre-Lutheran Protestant. He is, moreover, a predecessor, and no unworthy one, of our analogists and Natural Theologians—of Butler, Clark, Fénelon, Chalmers, Simon—and, so far as he maintains the superiority of the Book of Creation over other modes of Revelation, declares that it should be learned first, and that it contains all that is needful to human knowledge and salvation; so far he may be said to resemble in some important points our very latest school of physical-science philosophy.

. . . . . .

TREVOR. Many thanks, Harrington, for your summary. I know what a trial it must have been for such a classical

Dictionary, Art. 'Sebonde,' note D. Comp. on the same subject the letter of Dr. Payen to M. Gustave Brunet.

[1] The Abbé Labourderie tells us, in his *Christianisme de Montaigne* (p. 154, note), that the Preface was placed on the Index under Clement VIII. Other writers, as Oudin (*De Script. Eccles.*), assign its prohibition to Clement VII. But if we may credit the copy of the Index affixed to vol. ii. of the *Dictionnaire des Hérésies*, published by Migne, which contains the entry relative to Raymund's Preface as follows: 'Sabund, seu Sebunde (Raymundus de) Prologus in Theologiam Naturalem (*Ind. Trid.*),' the Preface was prohibited in the Index of Pius IV. which is called the Tridentine. The prohibition was taken off, adds the Abbé, under Benedict XIV., but he gives no authority for his assertion. The fact would seem to be that the Preface *still* retains its place on the Index, and is even now omitted in Roman Catholic editions of the *Natural Theology*, *e.g.* Sighart's ed. (Solisbaci 1852). Comp. Noack, *Hist. Biog. Handwort.* Art. 'Raymund.'

[2] Dr. Willis, in his *Servetus and Calvin*, thinks it possible that Servetus may have been influenced by Raymund's work. P. 15.

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purist as you are to wade through the six hundred and odd pages of what Hallam calls the 'uncouth Latin' of the 'Theologia Naturalis.'

HARRINGTON. Yes, that was the worst part of the business, until I got a little used to it. Nothing can be more crude, inartificial, I might even say barbarous, than Raymund's style; but it compensates by perspicuity of thought and closeness of reasoning for its open disdain of all the graces of Latin prose composition. Some twenty years ago I should not have had the resolution to read through two pages of such Latin as Raymund's for fear of injuring the Ciceronian style of which I was then so vain. I have now attained an age when the more intellectual qualities of power, originality, cogency of reasoning, and clearness of expression have a superior attraction for me than mere linguistic adornment, which, like other kinds of beauty, is after all but skin-deep.

ARUNDEL. Raymund is, no doubt, a most interesting character, who seems to have lived two centuries before his time, but I am inclined to demur to our classification of him. A man who insisted so strenuously on all the dogmas of his Church, and made even his rationalism subserve the interests of those dogmas, was surely no Skeptic.

TREVOR. We have already seen in the case of Ockam and others that the formal recognition of ecclesiastical dogma is quite compatible with a very considerable latitude of speculation, and such cases, as we know, are frequent in the history of the Church. We have, moreover, touched upon a division of Skepticism which we shall often meet in our future investigations, and which has been termed 'ecclesiastical;' we may define it as the method of Sextos Empeirikos, adapted, like an old rusty weapon cleaned and furbished up, to fight the battle of ecclesiastical orthodoxy.

MRS. HARRINGTON. Rather a dangerous weapon in awkward hands, I should say. As to Raymund, my difficulty about him is this. The preface of his 'Natural Theology' seems so far in advance of, and thereby to differ so widely from, the rest of his book, that it is almost improbable that the two should be the work of the same man. The question

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I would ask is, which of them best represents the genuine Raymund?

HARRINGTON. Of the two, I should say the preface. In that you have a simple directness of purpose, together with a freedom and spontaneity of utterance which generally characterize the expression of a man's own opinion, whereas nothing can be more forced than the purely dogmatical portions of his work. But in my opinion the discrepancy between the two is not greater than that which occurs in many a human enterprise of a similar kind. In laying down a plan whether of philosophy, religion, or anything else, a man is like the architect of some great building, evolving his own idea, and limited only by the wealth of his knowledge, taste, experience, and imagination: it is when he begins to carry it into effect that difficulties arise. The ground chosen turns out unsuitable, there is a dearth of fitting materials, continual struggles with trade-unions and strikes, or sufficient funds are not forthcoming—to all which exigencies his own elaborated conception is sacrificed, like Sir Christopher Wren's first idea of St. Paul's. The plan remains perfect but on paper; the actual building in stone and mortar is so modified, reconstructed, and curtailed as to be hardly more than a caricature of the original design. Raymund's conception, as laid down in his preface, is doubtless a noble one, but, as we said, it was thwarted and mutilated by dogma. . . . His proper task, I might say the proper task of every natural theologian, would, in my opinion, be to show the analogy of nature with the truths and precepts of Christianity as laid down by the Founder. What Raymund sought to prove was that such analogy existed with regard to the doctrinal development of the fifteenth century—a very different matter.

TREVOR. Raymund bears a strong resemblance to Descartes as regards the incongruity between the original design and the subsequent development of his philosophy. Descartes's scheme of evolving all knowledge from the principle 'Cogito ergo sum' is like Raymund's idea of developing all theology from a contemplation of nature. Both alike share a simple grandeur of idea and a wide reach of generalization,

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but both deviate from their principles when they receive a constructive development. Nor is it only Raymund and Descartes that may be classified under Harrington's 'Architect's Failures.' Most systems of human thought labour under some defect, not of primary conception but of subsequent excogitation or practical application. Hence the history of philosophy seems to me like a museum of patents or inventions. We realize the truth, simplicity, utility, &c. of the primary conception, but in most cases we discover that practically the invention turned out a failure. Indeed, the universe does not seem framed to satisfy the exigencies of those who must needs have a thought-scheme at once simple, homogeneous, and of universal application.

MISS LEYCESTER. In that case a man's thought is like his existence. Every original mind maps and plans out his ideal of life, but it is fated practically to be cruelly maimed and mutilated by the iron forces of circumstances and destiny.

ARUNDEL. Returning to Raymund . . . I must confess to a difficulty in making out the theory of your paper as to the province of natural theology. You seemed to imply that inquiries into nature, its laws, and phenomena, together with their moral or religious bearings, should be independent of Christianity.

HARRINGTON. My full conviction is that nature, if interrogated impartially and comprehensively, gives all the evidence we could reasonably expect in favour of the fundamental positions of Christianity. Hence we cannot, I think, improve on the old theory of the two books, 'Creatura et Scriptura,' 'Nature and Revelation.' Only their evidence should, in my opinion, be taken apart. Each should, in fact, be put out of court when the other is undergoing cross-examination. Raymund's merit was that he saw and maintained this in theory, though, as we saw, he neglected it in practice.

ARUNDEL. Excuse me, but your notion does not seem borne out by our experience of the ordinary effect of an exclusive devotion, whether to science or theology.

HARRINGTON. What I mean is, that nature and theology

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should be allowed to propound their methods and dicta independently, but, this done, the final decision of the issues between them should be left to the higher judicial intellect, which, with a full comprehension of the two, poises in impartial balances their merits, and decides accordingly. The truths of science and theology are in a mean equally removed from the extremes of both, and therefore the unqualified preponderance of either is to be deprecated. It was an ill day for the human intellect when theology dominated over it, but it will be a scarcely less evil day for the whole varied field of human thought, feeling, and aspiration when physical science is allowed to become its tyrant.

MISS LEYCESTER. I suppose the difficulty in establishing a *rapprochement* between natural science and theology consists in the assumed disparity of their methods, which, for my part, I am unable to concede. I am conscious of possessing only a single indivisible faculty of reason, which I must needs apply to science and to theology. I cannot discriminate the grounds of my belief in the existence of Deity from those on which I base my conviction of the general truth of some theory of physical science, say, *e.g.* evolution. In each case I am conscious of a primary need, in the first instance of some originating mind or reason to account for the laws and order of the universe, in the other of a demonstration that successions of natural phenomena are adequately accounted for by evolution: yet when I avouch my needs to a scientist, I am likely to be told—'Your first need is arbitrary, self-evolved, sentimental, and superficial; your second is natural, intellectual, and reasonable.' All I can plead in rejoinder is that I am unconscious of any such distinction, on which, perhaps, I get the customary reproach of 'confusion of methods,' 'intellectual haziness,' 'predilection for half-truths,' &c.

ARUNDEL. Most true, Miss Leycester. Nothing, I confess, angers me so much as the Pharisaic contempt of the mere science professor for every method of culture except his own. Without going so far as Raymund, who thought researches into the lower orders of the creatures mean, I venture to think, judging from some experience, that natural

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science may have a far more narrowing influence than almost any other intellectual pursuit. A man, *e.g.* who devotes his existence to the collection of Coleoptera insensibly acquires the notion that the earth was originally designed for the advantage of his favourite insects, just as the average theologian believes it was destined solely for the habitat and development of man. Now it appears to me that the latter conviction, however imperfect, is infinitely nobler in its implications than the former. As to the denouncers of half-truths, if they mean not a wilful *suppressio veri* but an acquiescence in partial or proximate truth, I can only say that many of the generalizations we seem compelled to accept are precisely of this kind. If all their truths are 'whole truths' they must boast a good fortune, in which most men would be eager to share, and it would not be too much to demand their production, so that we might judge of the vaunted completeness, and see how far it can stand tests of analysis and disintegration.

TREVOR. While dealing with Raymund's emphasis on nature, we must not forget that this does not sum up his contributions to the cause of Free-thought. Hardly less important is his insistence on human reason and conscience as ultimate tribunals of truth. We are now so accustomed to arguments based on these principles that we can hardly realize the time when they were quite neologian and heterodox. I must look into Raymund's book more fully than I have yet done, if only for the queer anomalous kind of sensation which I should suppose it would produce. To read a Roman Catholic controversial work, consisting of some six hundred pages, without a single direct appeal to the *ipse dixit* of Pope or council, or even of Holy Scripture, would be as exhilarating as witnessing a representation of Hamlet with the part of the Prince of Denmark left out.

HARRINGTON. There is another point worth considering, and that is the influence of Raymund of Sabieude on Montaigne and Charron, and through these on the long line of French Free-thinkers and nature-worshippers which finally culminated in Rousseau and the principles of the Revolution. When we come to discuss Montaigne, we shall find to what

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an extravagant extent he pushed his principles of obedience and submission to nature, even advocating a return on the part of civilized Europe to the primitive state of things—

When wild in woods the noble savage ran.

This nature-enthusiasm he probably derived from Raymund.

TREVOR. Perhaps so, but for my part I would deprecate the prevalent tendency to ascribe to special influences what seems owing to the *Zeitgeist*. Nature-worship is, in the philosophy of religion, the general and inevitable reaction against a too exclusive assertion of the supernatural. These two books of Raymund's are like, if I may be allowed the simile, two well-buckets, the ascent of the one involving the descent of the other. In the time of Raymund, the bucket of nature was slowly rising from the draw-well, overflowing with clear, fresh, cold water, for the lustration and refreshment of Europe, while the sister vessel of the supernatural was undoubtedly descending. This revivification of nature is what, in my opinion, is chiefly meant by that aggregate of volcanic forces to which we give the collective name of the Renaissance, and of which, as is now admitted, the religious reformation of Luther and Calvin only forms a part. The causes of this general convulsion were in reality as manifold and diverse as have been its effects. It is a puny and unworthy conception of such a many-sided movement to regard it as the confluence of two or three main streams. It is rather the meeting-point of a large number of tributaries of various sizes and degrees of strength, coming from different, often opposite, directions, and agreeing only in the common property of contributing each its own quota to the rapidly broadening river. The bare enumeration of the multiform causes, religious, political, literary, and social, which concurred in the Renaissance, to say nothing of meting out the due proportion in each case, has always appeared to me a hazardous and invidious, if not an impossible, task, albeit one which we must by-and-by attempt.

ARUNDEL. I entirely object to your well-bucket illustration, which makes nature and Scripture antagonistic instead of complementary to each other. It would be truer

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to say that Raymund's two books 'Creatura et Scriptura' might be taken as the main principles, the first of the secular Renaissance, the second of the religious reformation. The former animated the wild and licentious Free-thought of France and Italy; the latter, the more sober and measured freedom of Germany and England. But both travelled in the same direction and had similar objects in view. Their real relation was mutually counteractive and supplementary, not destructive. As a matter of history, the nations that adopted 'Scriptura' have enjoyed a far greater amount of liberty, political and intellectual, than those that took 'Creatura' as their guiding principle.

MISS LEYCESTER. In the latter part of your paper, Charles, you speak of the dualism of Raymund. He was not an advocate of Twofold Truth, was he?

HARRINGTON. Not directly, certainly, though indirectly and occasionally he adduces arguments which are mutually conflicting. In point of fact, he could not openly have sanctioned the doctrine of Twofold Truth without cutting the ground from under his own favourite argument from analogy, of which it is the logical converse. Every analogist starts with the presumption that nature and Revelation being products of one Divine Mind, there can be no discrepancy in their utterances. The contrary supposition, as we have seen, constitutes the very basis and definition of Twofold Truth. Raymund, therefore, as is natural, dwells occasionally on the oneness of truth, and the impossibility of contradictories being true at the same time.[1]

ARUNDEL. Though Raymund is, like Butler, an analogist, he seems to carry the demonstrative cogency of his analogy much further than the wary bishop.

HARRINGTON. No doubt Raymund, like most writers on the subject, has overstated the logical force of his ratiocination. But if he is inferior to Bishop Butler in that respect, he is his superior in the clear assertion of the original coequality of nature with Revelation. Hence, in my opinion, evidence-writers of the future must do what those of the

[1] *Eg. Theol. Nat.* p. 93.

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past have mostly neglected. If they wish to convince not only those who have been dieted on theological ratiocination, and have thus acquired a predilection for theological conclusions, but also those among scientists who have not sacrificed their spiritual instincts and intellectual ingenuousness at the shrine of Physical Science, they must base their arguments on such axioms and primary definitions as were laid down in the early part of the fifteenth century in the preface to Raymund's 'Theologia Naturalis.'

. . . . . .

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EVENING XII.

CORNELIUS AGRIPPA.

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'Agrippa kept a Stygian pug,
I' th' garb and habit of a dog,
That was his tutor, and the cur
Read to th' occult philosopher,
And taught him subtly to maintain
All other sciences are vain.'

BUTLER, *Hudibras.*

'Nihil scire, felicissima vita.'

AGRIPPA'S motto to his work *On the Uncertainty and Vanity of Sciences and Arts.*

'And some are wilder comrades, sworn to seek
If any golden harbour be for men
In seas of death and sunless gulfs of doubt.'

TENNYSON.

'Je ne puis avoir que de la compassion pour ceux que gémissent sincèrement dans ce doute, qui le regardent comme le dernier des malheurs, et qui n'épargnant rien pour en sortir, font de cette recherche leur principale et leur plus sérieuse occupation.'—PASCAL, *Pensées*, Ed. Havet I. 137–8.

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EVENING XII.

CORNELIUS AGRIPPA.[1]

AGRIPPA being one of the subjects originally claimed by Mr. Harrington, the meeting was again held at his house.

When the company assembled in the study after dinner—

MRS. ARUNDEL (began). What is that very portly volume you are putting on the table, Mr. Harrington?

HARRINGTON. The 'Opera Omnia' of our subject this evening. Here you have the celebrated Cornelius Agrippa —the philosopher, the soldier, the divine, the physician, the astrologer, the Skeptic, the man and the Christian—depicted in 2,050 pages 18mo. of rather close type.

MISS LEYCESTER. Thank goodness we have not all been compelled to make the acquaintance of the great magician by means of such an unwieldy-looking medium. I have been contemplating his lineaments in the reduced likeness of Professor Morley's careful study; and a very agreeable occupation I found it. As it happened, I had just finished the 'Life of Casaubon' when Charles began to collect his

[1] In this chapter the following works are those chiefly referred to :—

1. *Henrici Cornelii Agrippæ Opera.* Lugdini 1531.

2. *Cornelius Agrippa.* By Morley. 2 vols. London 1856.

The 'De Vanitate' is quoted from one of the 12mo German editions (*Hagæ Comitum-Adriani*, Vlacq. 1662) and the English translation of James Sanford (London 1569). The 14th volume of the *Retrospective Review* contains an elaborate article on the last-named work, which, however, does not attempt to discuss Agrippa's character, or his relation to the times in which he lived.

Naudé, *Apologie pour les grands hommes*, &c.

De la Démonomanie des Sorciers, p. 240, &c. Par J. Bodin. Paris 1587. See also Scheible's *Kloster*, vol. ii. p. 218, &c.

The best dictionary articles on Agrippa are Bayle, Moreri, Ersch and Grüber, *Biog. Universelle* (Michaud), *Nouvelle Biog.* (Hoefer).

On the relation of the Faust-legend to Agrippa's Life, comp. Scheible, *Kloster*, vols. ii. iii. and v.

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materials for to-night's paper, and the next book I read was Morley's 'Life of Agrippa.' The two books might profitably be studied together. What a vivid representation they give us of the wanderings, trials, and disappointments of scholars in the sixteenth century! Contrasted with the prosaic existences of our own day, the 'Life of Agrippa' might be almost called a Romance.

TREVOR. I should rather call it a philosopher's tragedy. Poor Agrippa was, in my opinion, quite hunted to death by his ignorant and implacable enemies the monks, and is, if not a martyr like Bruno and Vanini, undoubtedly a confessor to the sacred cause of Free-inquiry. I am glad that it has been reserved for an Englishman, following in the steps of Naudé,[1] Moreri,[2] Bayle, and others, to disperse so completely the clouds of obloquy and misrepresentation which have so long darkened the fame of one of the noblest characters of which philosophy can boast. To the truth of Professor Morley's representation I can bear testimony, as I took the pains of going through his book with the works of Agrippa at my elbow. The only fault I have to find in him is that he does not seem to me to lay sufficient stress on the earnestness and profundity of Agrippa's Skepticism.

HARRINGTON. The popular prejudices you have spoken of are the result not only of the calumny of his enemies, but of a partial and one-sided knowledge of his works. Agrippa the Magician is the highly coloured representation of the picture in neutral tints afforded by his work on 'Occult Science.' Those who wish for a genuine portrait, all the more trustworthy because unintended, of the actual man—his secret thoughts, passions, and aspirations—must refer to his letters. Bayle's testimony of their effect in proving the sincerity of Agrippa's piety and Christianity is emphatic.[3]

[1] *Apologie pour tous les grands hommes qui ont esté accusez de Magie*, par M. Naudé, pt. ii. chap. xv. p. 239.

[2] *Dictionnaire Historique*, art. 'Agrippa.'

[3] 'Quant à la Magie dont on l'accuse, je consens que chacun en croie ce qu'il voudra. Une chose sais-je bien, c'est que les lettres qu'il écrivait à ses intimes amis, sans prétendre qu'elles fussent un jour imprimées, portent toutes les marques d'un homme stylé aux réflexions de religion et au langage du Christianisme.'—Bayle, *Dict.* art. 'Agrippa.'

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They would be well worth translating into English, and, with explanations, notes, and extracts from his works, would give a better idea of Cornelius Agrippa and his times than could be derived from any other source.

MISS LEYCESTER. In reading the lives of Agrippa and Casaubon I have been reminded of our earlier friends the Greek philosophers. The continual wanderings of the former are not unlike the restless vagabond life which some of the latter appear to have lived, but in respect of happiness and the enjoyment of life I should rather have shared the lot of Pythagoras or Xenophanes 500 B.C. than that of Agrippa or Casaubon 1600 A.D.

ARUNDEL. No doubt the Greek peasant and olive-farmer or the town merchant and artizan afforded much better material for a Free-thinking philosopher to work upon than the untaught citizens or the fanatical monks of the sixteenth century. But what I dislike in the career of such men as Agrippa and Casaubon is what I should term 'literary mendicancy.' They go, so to speak, staff in hand and their wallets on their backs from one great house to another, from the court of this king or queen to that of the next king or queen, with a long face, a beggar's plaintive whine and extended hands, supplicating pensions, gifts, alms—whatever, in short, their haughty patrons may be graciously pleased to throw at them.

HARRINGTON. That, of course, was the dire necessity of their position. Unfortunately a student's life must in every age be one of many requirements. Leisure, books, and money are luxuries which, in the actual distribution of earthly blessings, do not fall to the lot of every man. Literature even in our own days is not of itself invariably certain to lift its professor to the summit of wealth and happiness, but in the time of Agrippa the lot of the scholar and book-writer was infinitely inferior. He had no reading public to appeal to, as his modern successors have. When he published, he had to do so at his own risk and expense, and one of the most affecting circumstances in the life of Agrippa is that he was compelled out of his scanty and precarious means to satisfy the claims of his publisher. Some dependence, therefore,

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in 'royal and noble' patrons was then an unfortunate necessity. It must also be allowed that such a life was far from being, in every case, an unhappy one, or devoid of even the rarest blessings that can fall to the lot of ordinary humanity. Take the life of Erasmus, for example.

MISS LEYCESTER. At all events, Agrippa's 'literary mendicancy' was by no means of the humble, whining, supplicating order. He demanded not the alms, which he might fairly have deemed to be no more than the due of a scholar who was expending all his energies of soul and body to enlighten his fellow-men, but some one of the many court offices which would have combined half-literary duties with the means of preserving himself and family from starvation. But his applications are, as a rule, quite untainted by excessive humility; and when, as too frequently happened, the promised salary remained long overdue, he expressed himself with a distinctness, not to say bluntness, of speech that clearly proves nature never intended him for a courtier. His language to such potentates as Charles V., Queen Louise of Savoy, and Margaret of Navarre exonerates Agrippa from the charge of commonplace 'mendicancy.' Had he been more pliant and obsequious, his life would probably have been happier.

MRS. HARRINGTON. I have seen it stated that Agrippa was the real original of the Dr. Faustus of Marlowe and Goethe. Is this really so?

HARRINGTON. Dr. Faustus, whose historical existence is now generally conceded, was quite a different personage from our Agrippa, though they were contemporaries, and died—or, in the case of Faust, I ought to say disappeared—about one time. So far from Agrippa being the original of Faust, the paternity is all the other way—in this respect, at least, that the legendary form which the monks gave to the life of Agrippa was suggested by Faust-myths, which were already in existence. Faust is first mentioned in a letter bearing date 1507 (when Agrippa was only twenty-one years of age), but the legend does not assume an elaborate form until about 1562[1] (twenty-seven years after his death), when

[1] See the Faust-volumes in J. Scheible's *Klöster*, especially vols. ii. iii.

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we first find the two magicians in company, and Faustus is duly attended by the—

> Stygian pug
> I' th' garb and habit of a dog

—just as, in the monkish representation of him, Agrippa himself was. The original Faust died about 1548 or 1550, and was then said to have been from sixty to seventy years of age. Wier, the great 'demonographer,' was a disciple of Agrippa's. He likewise mentions a Faustus, of whom he gives a brief history; though he does not appear to be aware that his master was regarded as the original Dr. Faust. This is the more noteworthy, because he knew the monkish legends concerning Agrippa, and denies that Agrippa's little black dog 'Mounseer' was a diabolical familiar.[1] So much I think is clear, that Faustus and Agrippa were contemporaries; that the legends concerning each, though in some points quite

and v., and the exhaustive article on 'Faust-Sage' in Ersch and Grüber. The connection of Faust's name and attributes with those of Agrippa occurs in a collection of commonplaces by Joannes Manlius (Basle 1562), where we are told that Faustus 'Vivens adhuc habebat secum canem, qui erat Diabolus sicut iste nebulo qui scripsit "De Vanitate Artium, etiam habebat canem secum currentem qui erat Diabolus"' (E. and G. section i. vol. xlii. p. 97). Another part of Manlius's story is thus quaintly 'Englished' by James Sanford, in the Introduction to his translation of Agrippa's *De Vanitate*: 'For as John Manlius, a Germaine writer, doth recorde, when he (Agrippa) was at the pointe of death, he called to him a dogge, which wente aboute with him, and spake to him with these wordes, *Abi a me, perdita bestia, quæ me perdidisti*, that is, Depart from me, thou wicked beast, which hast destroyed me. So forthwith the dogge departinge from him, caste himselfe headlonge into a river. This dogge was without doubt a Divel of Hell.'

[1] On the absurd stories current about Agrippa's dogs, comp. Wier, *De Præstigiis Dem.* ii. chap. v., and Naudé, *Apologie pour les grands hommes*, &c. p. 309. Agrippa had generally two dogs in his study, one called 'Mounseer,' the other 'Madamoiselle.' The reader need hardly be reminded that a great black dog is the orthodox and generally approved form of the diabolical coadjutor to all great magicians. *A propos* of Agrippa's fondness for dogs, Naudé mentions a considerable number of the various dumb pets of eminent men, who were not on that account suspected of magic, and the list might be indefinitely extended. Mrs. Grote tells us that a considerable part of her husband's works was written across the back of a Spitz-dog 'Dora.' Such an instance, two centuries ago, would have been regarded as a sufficing cause of the pernicious devotion to liberty political and philosophical, with which Grote's works are permeated.

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different, are in others intermingled and confused; and that the rapid diffusion of Faust-legends during the latter half of the sixteenth century may, perhaps, be owing to this confusion, evidently originated and fostered by the monks, as well as to the fact that there were actually two historical notorieties on which to base them.

TREVOR. I don't dispute your accuracy, Harrington; still, names and dates are perilous things, where myths, which are embodiments of ideas and instincts deeply rooted in human nature, are concerned. There may or may not have been an historical Dr. Faustus, but I should be inclined to attribute the rapid growth of the legends respecting him to more general and deeply seated causes. They serve as the popular imaginative expression of the profound mental restlessness of the sixteenth century, when the incoming tide of the Renaissance may be said to be approaching its height. Older knowledge, systems of dogma, political institutions, social habits, were either giving way, or showing signs of coming dissolution. Human wisdom, it would seem, had reached the end of its tether, but without discovering the perfect truth of which it was in search, or quenching its own thirst for further progress. Of this feeling Faust and, in some respects, Agrippa are illustrations. To still his restlessness and allay his ardent thirst for better and fuller knowledge, the former, if the legends about him are true, betook himself to magic. For a similar reason the latter, following the example of the German Reformers, found refuge in the Bible.

MISS LEYCESTER. No doubt the number of these legends, and their widespread extension over Europe during the sixteenth and following centuries, indicate the existence of some feeling of that kind. But you would not limit these influences in their general effect to the sixteenth century, Dr. Trevor?

TREVOR. By no means. Our own investigations have shown clearly that intellectual unrest, in some degree of development, is peculiar to no one race or epoch. From the sixteenth century downwards, *e.g.* the most advanced thought of modern Europe seems permeated by a similar feeling,

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and most of the names famous in literature have been exponents of it. Nor is it confined to the cultured classes: its existence as a general sentiment seems to me proved by the enduring popularity of such dramas as Goethe's 'Faust' and Shakespeare's 'Hamlet;' both of which express it though in a different manner, the first as intellectual, the second as moral, uncertainty.

HARRINGTON. The most popular poet of Germany at present is Heine—the very incarnation of mental disquietude.

ARUNDEL. You both seem to me guilty of exaggeration. Our modern history, with its multitudinously varied phases, cannot without violence be compressed into a continuous 'Sturm und Drang.' There must, of course, always be a certain amount of restlessness, otherwise all thought and speculation would become stagnant and lifeless. Such a state, when natural, is the analogue in the realm of mind of the storms and hurricanes in nature. But no one would infer from the fact of our equinoctial gales, *e.g.* that they represented even in our own fickle climate the normal state of the weather. You apply to the majority what is, in my opinion, true of only a small minority. Intellectual unrest is like every other extreme of refined idealism, whether in philosophy or religion—the luxury of the few. For my part, I should call it, in many cases, a disease more often self-induced than natural or spontaneous—the morbid excess of speculative activity, just as ritualistic devoteeism is the unhealthy development of religious activity, or mysticism the abnormal growth of religious introspection. Fortunately, common-sense, practical religion, the imperative nature of our ordinary human needs, must always confine these extravagances within a comparatively limited area.

MISS LEYCESTER. Please don't let us lose ourselves in generalities. . . . That Agrippa's inner life should be restless is hardly to be wondered at, considering that his outer life was little else than a succession of storms, with scarce a single intervening gleam of sunshine. Taking the cases of Agrippa, Bruno, and Vanini, it seems difficult to say whether the instability of their convictions was the cause or the effect of the restlessness of their lives. We may almost say they were

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doubly Skeptics: voluntarily or involuntarily, they proved the mutability of fortune, as well as, in their own opinion, the unreality of ordinary beliefs.

MRS. HARRINGTON. As to the first, most people, I fancy, are Skeptics. But you assume, Florence, that a Skeptic's outer life will always be restless. But if so, what becomes of the Ataraxia which we some time ago agreed was at least a possible issue of Pyrrhonism? Besides, compare Agrippa with Montaigne--the only other nobleman on our list, by the way. What can be more placid than his life? In the most perturbed period of French history, the spot where peace and quietness reign supreme is the château of Montaigne.

HARRINGTON. Nevertheless, our ordinary experience does assure us that there is generally a close mutual interaction between a man's outward and inward life, though it is difficult to say in all cases which exercises the primary and predominating influence. Our modern psychologists would probably say the inner, and would attribute the physical and mental vagrancy alike to the unstable condition or distribution of nervous forces—perhaps transmitted from a restless ancestor.

TREVOR. In some instances no doubt they would: and their argument, if conclusively proved, would assert for a few of our Skeptical friends a physical *raison d'être*, which would effectually and finally dispose of the vituperation they have been subjected to for so many centuries. As a rule, I believe the determinating causes to be mainly from without, and to be independent of any abnormal condition of nervous force. Three to one of the Skeptics on our list fully prove this.

ARUNDEL. What a pity we know so little of the ancestors of Skeptics! If we only possessed full information as to their lives, proclivities, temperaments, &c. we might form some approximate conclusion as to how far Skepticism is transmissible, and so accumulate a few facts for, or possibly against, some future Darwin or Galton.

TREVOR. Some such hereditary influence must, I think, be conceded, and with the advance of psychology will probably be more insisted on. That the argument should ever

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attain the dignity of scientific demonstration is too much to expect.

HARRINGTON. As at present advised, both history and our own experience seem to me opposed to a direct transmission, not merely of modes of acquiring knowledge common to every individual of the race, but of particular mental tendencies of a subtle, refined and recondite character. We shall no more learn the 'principium individuationis' of the intellect than the Schoolmen were able to determine that of physical forms. History certainly shows that a cycle of superstition is followed by a reactionary cycle of Skepticism. Moreover, as Mr. Galton has pointed out, the children of believing and pious parents frequently turn out libertines both in creed and in morals. And, as a matter of my own personal observation, I happen to know not a few cases, some of them very eminent ones, in which children of the same parent have taken not only different but quite opposite directions in respect of intellectual and religious belief. . . . But as our conversation is now becoming discursive, perhaps you will allow me to call your attention to the subject in hand by introducing to your notice the famous magician and Skeptic, Cornelius Agrippa.

Harrington then began to read :—

. . . . . .

Henry Cornelius Agrippa was born at Cologne in the year 1486. Like Montaigne, he was the son of a noble and ancient house. His family took its title of 'Nettesheim' from a small village about twenty-five miles from Cologne. Like his ancestors, he was sent early in life to the court of Maximilian I., where he remained as secretary until he was sixteen years of age. At twenty we find him in Paris, where he joins one of those secret societies of Theosophists or Rosicrucians which were so frequent in the large cities of Europe during the Middle Ages and the succeeding epoch of the Renaissance. It is probably from this very early period that we have to date those studies in occult learning to which, though he abandoned them in after-years, he is indebted for the largest and least desirable portion of his notoriety. After some wild exploits of a half-military kind in Spain, we next find him as a professor in the university of Dole, in Burgundy, expounding Reuchlin's book 'On the Mirific Word,' which he did with such success as to be made doctor of divinity. About the same time,

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wishing to secure the patronage of Margaret of Austria, he wrote his treatise 'On the Nobility and Pre-eminence of the Female Sex' —a book which some of our leading members of Woman's Rights Societies would do well to examine as the most remarkable contribution to their question during the sixteenth century. It bears the marks of youthful ingenuousness, not to say freshness, which the mingled experience of a lifetime could not but correct. Agrippa's marriage, which closely followed the composition of that work, may be regarded as a practical earnest of its author's sincerity, though cynics would suggest that this event should, in the nature of things, have preceded his enthusiastic panegyric. The marriage was nevertheless a very happy one, and, together with a second fortunate venture of the same kind, must have confirmed Agrippa's youthful opinions as to 'the Nobility and Pre-eminence of Women.'

His Parisian studies in magical lore bore fruit in 1510, when at the early age of twenty-four he composed his three books on occult science, to which I shall presently ask your attention. Happily for his own peace of mind, he was induced not to publish the work, though the MS. was soon repeatedly transcribed, and extracts and copies were first secretly, and afterwards openly, circulated.

The clouds which darkened the greater portion of his life had already begun to lower on the horizon. The Hebrew studies which his investigations into magical and cabalistic learning necessitated drew upon him the distrust of the ignorant monks, who, as Bayle remarks, suspected of heresy whatsoever they could not understand —a rather comprehensive category. These were days when the study of Greek was supposed to transform believers into heretics, and that of Hebrew to change Christians into Jews! Accordingly a fanatical Franciscan openly denounced Agrippa in the pulpit before the patroness to whom he had intended to dedicate his work 'On the Nobility and Pre-eminence'—as aforesaid. It would appear that the 'nobility' of Queen Margaret was not of that vigorous and hardy character as to withstand a plea for intolerance, in an age when it was the synonym of orthodoxy, and our youthful scholar experienced the first of those frequent disappointments to which fortune had destined him. Finding his prospects at the court of Margaret unpromising, he again returned to the service of Maximilian, by whom he was sent with an embassy to the English court of Henry VIII. While in London Agrippa lodged at the house of Dean Colet, and his intercourse with that liberal and half-Protestant dignitary was probably his earliest introduction

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to the plans and aspirations of such men as Ockam, Gerson, and Erasmus, who would gladly have welcomed a reform within the Church, though they deprecated a hasty severance from the time-hallowed institution. Agrippa shows manifest traces of these influences in an expostulation which he addressed to his calumniator, the Franciscan monk of Margaret's court, and which consists of a practical and not uneloquent exhortation to charity founded on the Gospels and St. Paul's Epistles. 'Excellent preaching to a rock' is Professor Morley's appropriate comment. On his return to Germany, Agrippa spends some time at Cologne, whence he is summoned to join the war in Italy. This curious alternation of philosophy and war, of the lecture-room and the battle-field, of learned tomes and blood-stained weapons, common to Agrippa as well as to Ulrich von Hutten and other scholarly knights, is a characteristic and significant feature of the time, to which our own history affords a kind of parallelism in Cromwell's heroes, to whom preaching and fighting came with equal indifference. Agrippa would seem to have been an adept at either performance. He accordingly lectures on Plato in the University of Pisa, and soon afterwards is taken prisoner in battle by the Swiss. Of more importance, as influencing his future relation with the court of Rome, is his appointment to the anti-Papal council of Pisa, and sharing with his brother members in the excommunication launched against them by Julius II. Shortly after, we again hear of him in his twofold vocation. He is knighted on a battle-field, and is admitted by the University of Pavia to be doctor of law and medicine, thus attaining almost simultaneously high honours both in war and in learning. At the age of thirty-two he is patronized by the Duke of Savoy, through whose influence he becomes advocate and orator to the free town of Metz. Here he again comes into contact with the monks. For some inscrutable reason, the Dominicans had adopted the dogma that St. Anne (the mother of the Virgin) had three husbands. As there was no historical ground for the assertion, it was combated vigorously by Agrippa and others, but with the result of increasing still further the animosity of his foes. Agrippa's undaunted courage in the cause of truth and liberty, as well as his partial emancipation from the slavish superstitions of the age, are well shown at this period of his life by his rescue of a poor inoffensive country-girl, branded with the deadly imputation of witchcraft, from the very jaws of the Inquisition. The narrative, either in Morley's Life or Agrippa's Letters,[1] is an

[1] Morley, *Life*, ii. pp. 57–65; Agrippa's *Works*, ii. pp. 755, 756, &c. The

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interesting exemplification of the nefarious and high-handed proceedings of the 'holy office.' Unluckily the victories of our hero in the cause of liberty are invariably preludes to embarrassment and defeat on the road to fortune. Having stirred up once more the fanatical bigotry of the monks, he is compelled to quit Metz. Treading on the heels of this disaster comes another and greater calamity. He loses his wife, to whom he was passionately attached, and is left to bemoan his uncertain prospects, without the companion who had hitherto shared his mutable fortunes. The needs of a small family induced him to marry again after an interval of about one year, and his second selection was as fortunate as his first. Though tempted by brilliant offers elsewhere, Agrippa accepted in 1524 office in France as physician to the queen-mother, but was unable to obtain his promised salary. He offended his patroness in 1526, by anticipating success for the arms of Bourbon, and probably still more by avowing his unwillingness to be employed in such a vain art as astrology; whence we perceive that the Skeptical period of his life had now set in. During the same year too, the work for which he is best known, and on which his character as a Skeptic is grounded, was written, though it remained for several years unpublished. A slight gleam of prosperity shines on his path in 1529, after his removal to Antwerp; but Nemesis is as usual on the watch, and prepared to exact severe retribution for the transient smile of Fortune. His wife dies suddenly of the plague, leaving him with the care of another family of small children. Agrippa remains at Antwerp for the next three years as imperial, though unpaid, historiographer, and, in consequence of the latter characteristic of his office, found himself imprisoned for debt. Being set free by the kind offices of friends, he removes in 1532 to Mechlin, and for the third time in his life marries. On this occasion his previous success—the sole good fortune of his life—deserted him. The woman proved unfaithful,[1] and three years after he procured a divorce from her. The climax of his misfortunes in other respects was reached by his publication in 1530 of his treatise 'De Vanitate.' The anger and fanaticism of the monks were thoroughly aroused by the plainness of speech with which Agrippa unveiled the corruptions of the Church; and the brief remainder of his life was an unavailing struggle against religious bigotry and persecution. The Emperor himself, whom

story is also told by Agrippa in his *De Vanitate*, cap. xcvi. 'De Arte Inquisitorum.'

[1] See note below, p. 499, and comp. Morley, ii. p. 285.

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nature designed for a monk but destiny elevated to a throne, refused to pay the arrears of his historiographer's salary, and threatened Agrippa's life. He was therefore compelled to flee into France. But his asylum became a prison, for here again he was immured for a short time because he expressed himself too plainly with regard to the queen-mother's injustice to himself. When he was once more set free, he wandered, a heart-broken exile from his country and from his family of helpless children, to Grenoble, where he died at the early age of forty-nine years, and where, by a final and culminating stroke of his malicious fortune, he was buried in a convent of his old enemies, the Dominicans, A.D. 1535.

Such was Agrippa's storm-beaten and short-lived existence. There seems a cruel irony in attributing supernatural powers, even of a diabolical kind, to a man whose own lot was so wretched and joyless,[1] and whose career was nothing else but a succession of crosses and misfortunes. One legend of his magical powers tells how he was wont to pay his creditors with coin which appeared to be genuine, but which soon proved to be pieces of wood or leather. On which Bayle well remarks, that if he had such a power we should not have those frequent apprehensions of want which occur in his letters. There is more dramatic propriety in the myths relating to Faust, who, notwithstanding his tragical end, takes his fill for the time being of every earthly enjoyment which he covets. But Agrippa's existence was not moulded by the imagination of popular legend—it was a stern and bitter reality. Passing now to what more immediately concerns us, Agrippa's intellectual career, like that of several of his brother Skeptics, is roughly divisible into two sections. For nearly the first thirty-five to forty years of his life he was engaged in accumulating convictions. He read the writings of the ancients, especially those of a mystical tendency, pursued his inquiries into natural science, experimented in optics, made observations in astronomy, commented orally and in writing on the works of philosophers, and, in his character of knight, experimented in fireworks, and devised sundry machines for warlike purposes. During this period most of his works were written. It might be called the constructive or dogmatic portion of his life. The last ten years, on the other hand, are marked by disappointment, weariness, and unbelief. The older convictions of his life are passing away,[2] or rather they have in reality disappeared. He

[1] Moreri well remarks: 'Sa pauvreté, sa misère, et sa conduite font assez voir qu'il n'étoit pas grand sorcier.'—*Dict. Historique*, art. 'Agrippa.'

[2] Comp. the letter written in 1526, p. 327, vol. ii. of his collected works.

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doubts and questions everything, including the most elementary and generally accredited truths. The magician has become a Skeptic, and the author, credulous enough, we might suppose, of the 'Three Books on Occult Philosophy,' has now the painful revelation dawning upon him that he has wasted his strength for nought, and leaves the world his intellectual will and testament in the form of his treatise 'On the Uncertainty and Vanity of Sciences and Arts.' By examining these periods as they are represented in his two best-known works, we shall be able, I think, to gain a fair idea of the nature and extent both of his dogmatism and of his unbelief, as well as to determine to which of his twofold characters of magician and Skeptic he has the stronger claim.

The most important of Agrippa's earlier writings are the three books on magic and occult philosophy. We have already seen that it was the product of his youthful studies, and, though written when he was only twenty-four years of age, was not published until the end of his life, when he accompanied the publication with a distinct disclaimer of belief in these crude speculations of his youth: quoting on this point the words, 'When I was a child I spake as a child, &c.; but when I became a man I put away childish things.' But the lispings of some children are worth more than the articulate utterances of some grown men. And Agrippa's treatise on magic, though representing only a transitory phase of his intellectual progress, is by no means devoid of interest in our day, when not a few children still continue to lisp with the imperfect accents of the boyish philosopher in the sixteenth century.

Under the term magic or occult philosophy was understood generally what we should now describe as natural science. It comprehended, as Agrippa says, 'the knowledge of the whole of nature.'[1] Our author commences his treatise by announcing its purport, which he does with equal modesty and piety. There is, he tells us, a threefold world—elementary, celestial, intellectual. He purposes to ascend through these stages to the highest stage of all, which is God—in the words of the poet, to ascend

From nature up to nature's God.

He deprecates harsh criticism on account of his youth, and, with the customary proviso of all secular investigators of the time, disclaims such sense and meaning to his various propositions as shall not be found on examination in harmony with the dogmas of the

[1] *De Occult. Philosoph.* p. 2.

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Church. The commencement of the work carries us back through some 2,000 years of the world's history. We are listening to the Ionic philosophers of ancient Greece: again we have the division of nature into its four primary elements. Agrippa describes each of these, points out its secret virtues; *e.g.* earth, when purified by fire and reduced by requisite washing to extreme simplicity, is the 'first matter' of our creation, and the truest medicine that can restore or preserve us. Similarly water is the seminal virtue of all things, and air is a vital spirit passing through all things. Having thus laid down the properties of the simple elements, he proceeds to the consideration of the compounds which include the higher productions of nature. For example: in plants, the roots resemble the earth by reason of their thickness, and the leaves water because of their juice; flowers, the air, because of their subtle perfume; and seeds, the fires, on account of their multiplying spirit. The fourfold characteristics of the elements are in like manner traceable among animals, in whom the bones resemble the earth; the flesh, the air; the vital spirit, fire; the humours, water. Much of Agrippa's speculations on these subjects are derived from the Platonic and neo-Platonic philosophy, as they were understood in the sixteenth century, with illustrations taken from the Bible or classical authors; though there is a large admixture of the popular superstitions then current. Thus far Agrippa has only introduced his real subject, which is to investigate and determine the hidden virtues treasured up in the various products of nature. They are not produced, he tells us, by any element, but in every case are the resulting combinations of its species and form. The many marvels of nature supply him with forcible illustrations of latent virtue. As an instance, he adduces the hidden power in the stomach of the ostrich, which is said to be able to digest metals, and to which even red-hot iron is harmless! Were we to ask our magician the source whence these hidden virtues are derived, our answer would be a dissertation on Platonic ideas. Whatever exists on earth has its spiritual idea or counterpart in heaven. Thence it derives its secret virtue, which becomes operative by means of the soul of the world (*spiritus mundi*), that abstraction which exercised so great a fascination on the intellects of mediæval thinkers, and which we shall again meet in the speculations of Vanini and Hirnhaim. As the soul acts upon the human body, or as the soul of the universe produces all its varied movements and phenomena, so in every single object the concealed virtue or spirit makes it to be what it is, gives it its form and quality, and presents it before our human senses as the phenomenon

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possessed of certain characteristics which those senses dimly inform us of.

These abstruse speculations, considering the age which gave them birth, do not appear to me either unnatural or extravagant. We may smile if we like at the conception of the soul of the world and the existence of some minute portion of that soul in all natural objects, inanimate as well as animate. But what other explanation at all likely to command assent could be given, *e.g.* to such phenomena as those presented by the loadstone? I have frequently asked myself, when reading this and similar works on mediæval science, what account I could have given of such phenomena had I lived some three centuries ago. The resemblance to some secret principle of life and volition is so great that in the imperfect knowledge then available the assertion of such a principle seems to me inevitable. We need not, therefore, be surprised to find it a stock instance in every mediæval investigation into occult qualities. This mundane spirit is diffused through all things, but in different proportions. It especially abounds in the heavenly bodies, and descends in the rays they pour down on the earth, assimilating the nature of the objects on which they fall to their own higher nature. By this spirit hidden properties are conveyed into herbs, stones, metals, and animals, so that here occult philosophy touches upon astrology and alchemy.

Were it possible to separate this spirit from the matter in which it lies concealed, or if we could use only those things in which spirit predominates, we might achieve important results. The object of alchemy is thus to extract and obtain the spirit of gold or silver, so that by its infusion into baser materials they also might be transmuted into those precious metals, just as, *e.g.* the nature of the loadstone can be imparted to iron. Of course such a notion seems now-a-days absurd enough, but we may well remember that in this and every other dim groping of humanity after truth it is still the human reason that is at work, though with crude methods and imperfect materials. Hence there is some small residuum of rationality even in these 'alchemical pranks.' There is 'method' in the apparent 'madness.' We have long since noticed the enormous influence on human thought and language which has been exercised by abstraction, and what a clear, well-defined, half-materializing conception philosophers of the Platonic school had assigned to abstract notions. The separability of such notions from the substances in which they were embedded and concealed was accepted as an axiomatic truth. Now alchemy and occult philosophy merely carried the method a step further; they

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did nothing more than complete the materializing process. The spirit of gold, for example, that which gave it its distinctive quality—its *goldness*, so to speak—was supposed capable of being separated from its own matter and infused into other material substances, their ideas or spirits being similarly removed to make way for it.[1] To effect this was the climax of the alchemist's ambition, and, so far from there being anything in the science of the time to render it impossible, the highest knowledge then current pointed, as I have shown, to the practicability of such attempts. Moreover, all existing objects were then declared to be resolvable finally into a *materia prima*, mere abstract matter, or general potentiality of materialization; therefore there was no ultimate difference between the first matter of silver or gold and that of leather or wood. That Agrippa could pay his debts with pieces of the latter materials, to which he had magically imparted some portion of goldness or silverness, was, as we have seen, a popular legend concerning him, and this and similar stories of the magicians of the time were based, not upon the gross ignorance of the many, but upon the highest wisdom of the select few. But to resume: these infinitely varied ideas, which are the real causes of the variety of existing things, are taken charge of by ruling intelligences, who stamp everything with the mark of its own ideal virtue. By these spiritual agencies and intelligences it is that God works upon material objects; when He dispenses with these mediums, and acts directly upon matter, then we term the results miraculous.

We are next told how to discover the occult virtues of things: Firstly, like turns to like, and virtues come by way of similitude. Hence, if we want any particular property or virtue, we must look for it in those objects in which its presence is most marked. To promote love, for example, we must select animals that are most loving, as a dove or sparrow, and at a time when they have these affections most intensely.[2] 'To increase boldness, look for a lion or a cock, and take of these heart, eyes, forehead.

[1] Much information on this recondite matter may be found in an article on 'Alchymy' in vol. xiv. of the *Retrospective Review*. Compare, also, Ben Jonson's 'Alchemyst,' which, to English readers, has become almost a classic on the subject. We may remember that such men as Gassendi, Kepler, Boyle, and Bacon (Lord) were believers in the possibility of transmuting other metals into gold.

[2] These quotations are taken from Prof. Morley's work, who himself quotes from an old English translation of the *Three Books of the Occult Philosophy*. By J. F. London 1651.

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After the same manner doth a frog make one talkative, and the heart of a screech owl that is talkative of nights if laid over the heart of a woman when she is asleep will make her utter all her secrets. So animals that are long-lived conduce to life, as is manifest of the viper and snake. Moreover, the power of one thing may be transferred to another, as the power of loadstone to the iron. And the looking-glass used by a woman who is impudent will deprive of modesty another woman who looks often into it.' Thereupon follow examples equally conclusive of sympathies and antipathies among the different parts of creation, from the planets down to vegetables. Some of these occult powers operate only during life, others are equally effective after death. 'It is only when alive that the Echinus can arrest the course of ships.[1] They say also that in the colic if a live duck be applied to the stomach it takes away the pain and the duck dies. Generally parts of animals that are used should be taken from the animal while it still lives, and is in fullest vigour. The right eye of a serpent being applied relieves watering of the eyes, if the serpent be let go alive.' And the tooth of a mole will be a cure for toothache, if it was taken from a living mole, who was allowed to run away after the operation. Some properties remain after death attached to things in which some part of the idea remains. So it is that herbs when dried retain their virtue, and the skin of a wolf corrodes the skin of a lamb, and acts upon it not only by contact of substance, for the drum made of a skin of a wolf will cause that a drum made of a lamb's skin shall not sound.

Next follow thirteen chapters on the influences of the heavenly bodies. By the planets under which men have been born are determined their characters. Their trades are also to be classed under celestial signs, as old men and monks under Saturn; barbers, surgeons, executioners, and butchers, under Mars. Moreover, all terrestrial beings, animate or inanimate, possess each its own particular planet, the inferior in every instance being ruled by its

[1] This superstition dates from classical times. Cf. Lucan, *Phars.* vi. 673:—

> 'Non puppim retinens, Euro tendente rudentes
> In mediis echineis aquis.'

In old English plays the name of the fish is 'Remora.' So, in 'the City Match' (1639), we have these lines:—

> 'We show no monstrous crocodile,
> Nor any prodigy of Nile,
> No Remora that stops your fleet.'
>
> Hazlitt's *Dodsley*, vol. xiii.

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own superior. Nor is it only planets that exercise influence. The signs of the zodiac and the fixed stars are also potent agencies. We know by experience, says Agrippa—unluckily he does not tell the kind of *experience*—that asparagus is under Aries, and garden basil under Scorpio, for of the shavings of rams' horns sown comes forth asparagus, and garden basil rubbed between two stones produceth scorpions.

Skipping a number of chapters on the influence of the heavenly bodies—for my object is to give you a general notion only of this remarkable book—we come to auguries, and are told that a flying bird alighting on the right-hand side is a good sign, but on the left-hand side it is an evil sign. The cry or song of a bird as well as its flight is to be regarded as a prognostic. Swallows, because when dying they provide a place of safety for their young, portend a great legacy from the death of friends. A sparrow is a bad omen to one that runs away, for she flies from the hawk and hastes to the owl where she is in as great danger. Meeting of monks is an ill omen, especially in the morning, because this sort of people live mostly by the sudden death of men, as vultures do by slaughter.

The influence of the mind over the body is a branch of science —occult now as it was then—which affords Agrippa room for expatiating. Some of the marvels adduced under this head are still to be found as actual facts in contemporary works on mental physiology—Dr. Carpenter's, for instance. A singularly startling illustration of this class of prodigies is mentioned by Agrippa. 'Cyppus, after he was chosen king of Italy, dwelt for a whole night upon the vivid recollection and enjoyment of a bull-fight, and in the morning was found horned, no otherwise than by the vegetative power being stirred up by a vehement imagination, elevating corniferous humours into his head'[1]—a description which might stand as a typical illustration of M. Comte's metaphysical stage of human science. It will help us to understand why these marvels of occult philosophy were received in that age with such implicit faith, and at the same time serve to account for the success which in some cases doubtless attended the magician's advice and prescriptions, when we learn that hidden virtues can act strongly only by help of a strong faith. This faith is needful for the magician as well as for his patient, for whoever works in magic must always have strong belief, he must be credulous, and nothing doubting. Distrust and doubt dissipate and break the power of the worker's mind,

[1] This example of the power of imagination is also adduced by Vanini, *Dialogues*, p. 439, quoting, apparently, from Agrippa.

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whence it comes that he is frustrated of the desired influence of the superiors.[1]

Agrippa dwells at some length on the hidden wisdom contained in the Hebrew language, the letters of which are most sacred in substance, form, and spirit. The great teachers of the Jews divide their alphabet into twelve simple letters, seven double, and three mothers, which they say signify as characters of things the twelve signs, seven planets, and three elements, for they account air no element but as the glue and spirit of the rest. If you care to see how systematically the rudiments of this cabalistic lore were arranged by Agrippa and his brother magicians, you may glance at those abstruse-looking tables at the end of the first volume of his collected works.

That the Hebrew letters with their supposed sacred origin and associations should be regarded by Christians of that age with superstitious veneration is not very wonderful. But our magician, treading in the steps of Pythagoras, finds just as many wonders and marvels in the sciences of number and measurement, arithmetic and geometry. Every number in the former, and almost every figure in the latter, is represented as replete with significance and mystery. If, says Agrippa, there are so many occult virtues in natural things, what marvel if in numbers, which are pure and commixed only with ideas in the Divine mind, there should be found virtues greater and more occult? Time contains number. So does motion or action; so, therefore, must all things that move, act, or are subjected to time. The power of numbers has not only been asserted by the best philosophers, but it is also asserted in nature. For the herb cinquefoil resists poison and bans devils by the virtue of its number five. And the seventh son of parents who have not had daughters is able to cure king's-evil by word or by touch. The mystery of numbers is also declared by St. John in the Apocalypse: 'He that hath understanding let him compute the number and name of the beast.' Of his chapters on numbers we may select one as an example of Agrippa's teaching. Let us take, *e.g.* the number three. This, we are told, is a holy, powerful, incompounded number of perfection. It is the number of the Trinity. Three comprehends all time, past, present, and future; all space, length, breadth, and thickness. There are three states of existence for a man—under nature, law, and grace; three heavenly virtues—faith, hope, and charity; three worlds—intellectual, celestial, and elemental, and in man, the lesser world,

[1] Morley, i. p. 158.

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three parts which correspond to them—brain to the intellectual, heart to the celestial, and the viler parts to the elemental. Further on, of the number eleven it is said among other things, eleven is not sacred, but twelve is divine. Eleven exceeds the number of the commandments, and falls short of twelve, which is of grace or perfection. Yet sometimes it hath from God a gratuitous favour, as in the case of him who was called to the vineyard at the eleventh hour. At first sight these and similar speculations which Agrippa pursues through nearly half of his second book appear fantastic and capricious enough, but here as elsewhere there is a dim recognition of law, order, and immutability underlying these wild extravagances. So he says: 'The Most High created all things by number, measure, and weight; and nothing that was done was accidental, but all was by a certain Divine law. Hence let no one marvel at these mysteries.'

Geometry as well as arithmetic has its secret lore. Thus a pentangle hath great command over evil spirits through the power of the number five, and through the mystery of its double set of angles, inner and outer. The figure of the cross also hath great correspondence with the most potent numbers five, seven, and nine. It is also the rightest figure of all, having four right angles. Passing over theories of a similar kind in relation to music, the harmony of the spheres, the signs of the zodiac, divination by lot, &c. we arrive at one root-thought, not only of Agrippa's, but of all systems of theosophy and occult science. This is the doctrine of the *spiritus mundi*[1] or soul of the world, which we have already incidentally touched upon. Agrippa tells us that the doctrine has been held by poets and philosophers, and is confirmed by reason. The world has a soul and also a spirit; for it would be absurd to assume life in parts of the world, as flies and worms, and to deny life and soul to the entire world as a most perfect and noble body; or to say that heavens, stars, elements, give life and soul to things below, yet themselves have not that which they give. The soul of the world and the celestial souls partake of the Divine reason; the soul of the world is therefore a certain single vitality, filling all things, bestowing all things, binding and joining together all things, that it might make one frame of the world, and that it might be as it were one instrument, making of many strings one music, sounding

[1] The doctrine of the soul of the world is first found in a well-developed form in Plato's *Timaios*, but it probably formed part of the mystic lore of the ancient mysteries. Cf. Jowett's Introd. to Timaios, *Plato*, ii. p. 511, Edition 1, and Martin, *Études sur le Timée*, i. p. 346, &c.

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from three kinds of creatures, intellectual, celestial, and elementary, with one only breath and life.[1]

This brief sketch will suffice, I think, to give you a fair notion of what we must regard as the systematic convictions of the earlier part of Agrippa's life. For us they possess a twofold importance. They not only represent the nature of that curious mental conglomerate, on which the solvent power of Skepticism was subsequently brought to bear, but they show us the character and methods of the natural science of that period. As we have seen, it was a miscellaneous collection of materials which we should call heterogeneous, but which in an age so deficient in philosophical and scientific discrimination were no doubt homogeneous enough. These were derived from sources and authorities of the most diverse kind. The main ideas were drawn from Plato and his ultra-Platonic successors, but intermingled with their mysticism we find the fantastic dreams of alchemists and astrologers, the reveries of Jewish cabalists, the doctrines of the Church, the secret teachings of theosophists and Rosicrucians, the grotesque imagination of popular ignorance and religious superstition—the whole massed together in a wild and reckless fashion, with little regard to uniformity of design, coherence of materials, or stability of construction. Agrippa's occult philosophy represents indeed in some respects not only the dogmatic system of himself and other natural inquirers in the sixteenth century, but the intellectual processes and conclusions of uncivilized and partly civilized races in every period of the world's history. Echoes of it, gradually growing fainter, but still distinct enough for identification, may even be found in remote villages of our England of to-day, where the ideas, charms, and specifics of Agrippa's occult science still exist. So that the philosopher's abstruse and esoteric teaching of three centuries ago has become the 'folk-lore' of the present day, just as the feudal baron's luxuries, and much more than his

[1] This passage in the collected works (i. p. 241) is as follows: 'Est itaque anima mundi vita quædam unica, omnia replens, omnia perfundens, omnia colligans et connectens, ut unam reddat totius mundi machinam, sitque velut unum monochordum ex tribus generibus creaturarum, intellectuali, cælesti et corruptibili reboans, unico statu tantummodo et unica vita.' In the text, however, Prof. Morley's version has been adhered to, as rendered from earlier editions of *O. P.*, except that 'elementary' has been adopted as a translation of 'corruptibili' (instead of Prof. Morley's obvious mistake of 'incorruptible'). Agrippa clearly refers to the threefold division of beings with which he begins his work. On the other hand, the word 'statu,' in the last clause, ought to be 'flatu,' which is the reading of the earlier copies, and adopted by Prof. Morley.

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cultivation, are now the property of the poorest artizan or daily labourer.

There are many works which might be called, with reference to their authors, 'The Philosopher or Thinker in Motley.' Their first aspect impresses us with the strangeness or quaintness of the disguise, the difficulty of penetrating it so as to discover the living features hidden beneath. Agrippa's 'Occult Philosophy' is a work of this kind; literally, it is philosophy which is occult, truth-seeking in masquerade. Read it cursorily, and your perpetual comment will be, How very silly! but examine it a little more closely, regard it especially by the light, not of any one particular school of thought, but of the general effort of mankind to attain truth and wisdom—take for a moment the standpoint of philosophical catholicity, and you begin to detect the prince in beggar's attire; in other words, you discern beneath these rags and tatters culled indifferently from the sacred vestments of priests, the cloaks of philosophers, and the refuse heaps of popular superstition, the genuine inquirer, the restless searcher after truth, the veritable philosopher or lover of wisdom.

This indeed forms the connecting link between the first and second period of Agrippa's life, the common characteristic of the magician and the Skeptic. Both alike inquire; both have recourse to all human oracles past or present; both gather indefatigably every fact and every datum which seems likely, like the oyster the pearl, to contain that of which they are in search: the main difference being that one amasses with the undiscriminating haste and eagerness of youth every object which attracts his notice; the other, grown wiser and more cautious by sad experience, examines for the most part only to reject. Whereupon ultimately his hoarded treasure disappears; for, like the man in the Gospel, his final resolution, as we shall find, is to sell all that he hath in order to possess one 'pearl of great price.'

But before passing to Agrippa's Skepticism, there is a point of his 'Occult Philosophy' which deserves our notice, as it throws a considerable light on his character, and that is, the secret he intended it to conceal. For his work is not, as a careless reader might suppose, a haphazard collection of all the views and opinions then current upon magic and other cognate subjects. There is a special and well-defined object at which the author aims. In fact, the weird and quaint contents of the treatise serve to disguise not only the writer but the doctrine. There is a Holy of Holies beyond the outer court into which only the high-priest and a few chosen illuminati dare penetrate. Agrippa's early studies of the

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theosophies of his time made him acquainted with the characteristic they possessed in common with the old Greek mysteries—a final, dread, unutterable secret, which external ceremonies and formal expositions were intended to protect from vulgar gaze and profanation. Agrippa's secret, it is true, is not unutterable; he reveals it, but with the conviction that it will be comprehended only by the initiated. Those who know our magician only by his popular fame as a dealer in diabolical arts, the possessor of a 'Stygian pug,' will, I think, be surprised to learn what his profound secret is. Their thoughts will perhaps revert to the blood-signed compact with infernal powers which forms such a conspicuous feature of the Faust-myths. This is the secret most appropriate to a magician and sorcerer, but it is not Agrippa's. The object of his occult teaching and of the fervent yearning of his soul [1] is the treasured aspiration of all mystics—union with God. This is the penetralia of the grotesque and multiform temple he erected with so much labour. Recognising the essentially Divine nature of the human reason, and its similarity in kind to the highest reason of the universe, Agrippa purposes to rise by contemplation of the works of nature, and appropriation of their hidden qualities, to a mystical junction and identity with their great author. Hence, if he was a magician, it was the white [2] or mystic magic which he professed, and he might have taken to himself the verse of Molière—

Tout ce que je sais, n'est que blanche magie.[3]

This is the league which he would fain have made, the compact to which he was an eager party, and to seal which he might be said to have given his life's blood. His aspiration is heavenward

[1] 'Hæc est illa vera et summa mirabilium operum occultissima Philosophia. Clavis ejus Intellectus est quanto enim altiora intelligimus, tanto sublimiores induimus virtutes, tantoque majora et facilius et efficacius operamur. . . .' Speaking further of the means by which this intellectual exaltation is to be attained, Agrippa continues in the genuinely mystical vein: 'Mori enim oportet, mori inquam, mundo et carni, ac sensibus omnibus, ac toti homini animali qui velit ad hæc secretorum penetralia ingredi, non quod corpus separetur ab anima, sed quod anima relinquat corpus, de qua morte Paulus scribit Colossensibus,' &c. (*Opera omnia*, ii. p. 908). The whole letter is well worth reading. Comp. vol. i. pp. 248, 249. See, also, Prof. Morley's work, i. 186, 187, ii. 232.

[2] On white magic see Naudé, *Apologie pour des grands hommes*, &c., pp. 22, 23, who thus defines it: 'Laquelle sous couleur de religion commande les jeusnes et abstinences, la piété, pureté, candeur et integrité de vie, afin que l'âme qui veut avoir communication avec les Deitez supérieures ne soit en rien empeschée par son corps polu et contaminé.'

[3] Molière, *L'Étourdi*.

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not hellward, and the covenant he would make is not with Satan but with God.

But it is time to turn to the later aspect of Agrippa's character, *i.e.* his thoroughgoing Skepticism. Though contrasting greatly with his former position, there is no such complete opposition between them that the first might not by a gradation of phases shade off into the second. In the mystical portion of his life there is no doubt an unquestioning reliance on human sciences, while in the Skeptical portion all these means are expressly distrusted. Still, in both cases the highest Divine knowledge was regarded as in some measure the result of immediate intuition; the main difference between the two being that the teachings of Christ supply in his Skepticism the place which human sciences occupied in his mysticism.

The first clear intimation of a change in Agrippa's views is contained in his letters to his friends, in which he complains bitterly of being compelled by the ignorance of his patrons to employ the vain arts of astrology and divination. His book 'De Vanitate' was not written until 1526, when he was forty years of age, but it can hardly be doubted that its contents had been revolved in his mind for some years previously. Reading his past life by the reflected light of his latest work, the change represented by it is absolutely unavoidable. Whatever satisfaction he found in accumulating the multifarious data of the 'Occult Philosophy,' or feeding the flame of his devout aspiration by their subtle influences, it is quite impossible that either the satisfaction or the mystic glow could have been of long duration. There must under any circumstances have come a time when the intellect would revolt against the crude fantasies of the imagination, and when the hearsay evidence derived from the ignorant and superstitious would be replaced by decisive experiments of his own. But whatever the mental process, the result is undoubted. In his fortieth year he wrote, and four years after published, his 'De Vanitate,' in which he assails every part of human wisdom, and proclaims to the world his mature conviction that 'to know nothing is the happiest life.'

This work commences with an address to the reader, in which Agrippa with mingled humour and sarcasm anticipates the tumult he is about to create by running a-tilt against all human sciences, interests, and occupations. 'I well perceive,' he says (I quote from Sanford's very quaint though not always accurate translation), 'what a blouddy battaile I have to fighte and how daungerous this fighte will bee, seeinge that I am beset on every side with an armie of so mightie enemies. O with how many ingins will they

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assaile me, and with howe many shames and vilanies will they lode mee. First of all, the loowsie grammarians will make a stirre, and with their etymologies uppon Agrippa,[1] will geve mee a goutie name.' Together with the *pediculose* grammarians will be joined, he thinks, 'peevishe poets, trifle-selling historiographers, blustering oratours, obstinate logitioners, longe-tongued sophisters. The barbarous Lullist,' continues the quondam admirer of and commentator on Raymund Lull, 'with unfittinge woordes and solesismes will bringe my head in a maze; the fatal astrologers wil threaten me to be hanged, and with the unstable turninge of the heavens wil forbidde me Paradise. . . . The monstruous magitiens wil transforme mee as it were another Apuleius or Lucian into an asse; the contentious philosophers wil teare mee in peeces with most repugnant opinions; the morall philosophers, correcters of manners, wil write mee in a hundred fables; the brainlesse people wil exclaime on mee in the streates;' and so on through several pages of ill-omened anticipations. For once in his life our magician was undoubtedly correct in his predictions. Had he only been able to cast the horoscope of his own general fortunes or those of his patrons so accurately as he divined the prospects of his latest work, much of the evil of his life might have been averted. Coming to his introduction, he adduces authorities for his general argument that all knowledge is mischievous: 'Adam had never been banished out of the Paradise of blessednesse, if he had not learned of his maister the serpent to knowe good and ill. Socrates after that he had found out wel neare al learnings, was then judged by the oracle of all men the wisest, when openly he confessed to knowe nothinge.' Whence he concludes, 'Nothinge can chaunce into man more pestilente than knowledge. This is the very pestilence that putteth all mankinde to ruine, the whiche chaseth away al innocencie, &c.; moreover, al sciences are nothinge els but the ordinances and opinions of men, so noysome as profitable, so pestilent as holsome, so ill as good, in no parte perfecte, but doubtful, and full of errour and contention; and that this is true we will nowe declare it.'

Whereupon Agrippa takes the sciences one by one. He begins with the letters of the alphabet, which, though 'onely doores to sciences, oftentimes they bringe with them no lesse pestilence then pleasure, in the whiche there is no other rule of the trueth than the decrees and will of some that did first teache.' Of these 'beginninges so unconstant, and at everie season so mutable, did grammar

[1] Agrippa is generally derived from *Ægris pedibus*.

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firste proceede. . . . This grammer dothe boaste herselfe to be the arte of speakinge but falsly, sithe that we learne it much better of oure mothers and of nourises than of the Grammarians.' The divisions prevailing among the latter are pointed out, of whom there are as many grammars as grammarians. Agrippa is very severe on poets and poetry, against which he quotes the strictures of antiquity: 'Worthely, therefore, Democritus termeth this no Arte but a madnesse, and the opinion of Plato is that he that is wel in his wittes knocketh in vaine at the doore of Poetrie. Then Poetes write marveilous things when they are mad or droncke. For this cause Augustine calleth Poetrie the wine of errour, ministred by drunken Doctours.' History consists largely of 'trimme trifles and monstruous lyes. Rhetorick dothe allure the mindes of the simple and leadeth them into the Poyson of Errour, seeking to subverte the sense of the truthe.' The aim of sophistry is 'either to make the Truthe obscure or utterly to loose it.' The puritanical element in Agrippa's character is shown, *inter alia*, by his virulent invective against Church music. 'The Divine Service is sung not for the understandinge of the hearers, but for the stirring up of the minde with beastely squeaking, while the children bray the discante, some bellow the tenoure, some bark the counterpoynte, some howle the treble,' &c.—an anathema as coarsely vigorous as any ever hurled by John Knox against a 'kist o' whistles.' The sciences of arithmetic and geometry are included with all the rest as labouring under the common diseases of 'uncertaintie and vanitie.' As an illustration of Agrippa's somewhat grim humour and his feeling towards the monks, I must cull an extract from his chapter 'Of the Arte of Graving and Moulding.' He has been speaking as usual of the 'vanitie of the Arte,' and continues: 'Notwithstandinge I learned in time paste in Italie that there was in Pictures and Images an authoritie greately to be esteemed; for whereas, there was an obstinate strife betweene the Augustine Freeres, and the vulgar Chanons before the Pope, concerning the habite or apparel of St. Augustine; that is to saie, whether he did weare a blacke weede upon a white coate, or a white weede upon a blacke coate. And findinge nothinge in the Scriptures, whiche made to the ending of this strife, the Romaine Judges thought good to preferre the whole matter to Painters and Image Makers, and that which they coulde avouche out of Auncient Pictures and Images, should be holden for a Definitive sentence. I beyng grounded upon this example, when sometime with exceadinge great diligence I searched for the originall of the Freers Coule, and could finde nothinge for that matter in the Scriptures, at

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length I wente me to the painters, and for this thinge I sought in the cloisters and in the celles of the Freers where for the moste parte the histories of bothe Testamentes are painted. . . . I saw in no place a Freer's coule, and again diligently examininge every thinge from the beginninge, immediately in the foreparte of the Historie, the Divel was painted with a Cowle, to wite, he whiche wente to tempte Christe in the Deserte. I rejoiced exceadingly, that I had founde that in the pictures, whiche untill that time I coulde not see in writinge: that is to saie, that the Divel was the first authuor of the Cowle, of whom afterwarde I suppose that other monkes and Freers tooke up the facion under divers colours, or perhaps have retained it, as a thinge lefte to them by inheritance.' But the extent of Agrippa's Skepticism may perhaps be best apprehended by considering his treatment of astrology, alchemy, magic, and kindred sciences; for these are subjects on which he had expended a large amount of study, and on which he had lectured before learned audiences. Here, therefore, we might have anticipated a little more leniency. But no! of all human sciences these are the most false, or, as he has put it, of all human nesciences these are the most pronounced and conspicuous. Bitterly and repeatedly does he bewail the time he has wasted on them. No abjuration or retractation was ever more unreserved. Indeed, his extreme candour in reviewing his past studies borders on cynicism. Thus he tells us of his work on geomancy: 'I have written also a certaine booke of geomancie, farre differinge from others, but no lesse superstitious, false, or if you liste I will saie lieinge.' Still more explicitly he recounts his experience of astrology: 'I also beinge a boye learned this arte of my Father, afterward I loste muche time and laboure therein: At length I learned that wholy and altogeather it was builte upon no other foundation but upon meere trifles and fayninges of imaginations: and I am not onely sorie, but also doo repente me of my bestowed laboure, and I desired to rase out the remembraunce and use thereof, and it is longe since that I did renounce it, and woulde never have taken the same in hande againe, had not the importunate prayers of noble parsonages (whiche are wonte oftentimes to abuse passinge good wittes in doinge many unwoorthie actes) oftentimes enforced me eftsoones to take it in hand. And my peculiare profite persuaded me sometimes to availe myselfe by their folie, and please them in their trifles that so muche desired trifles, and I call them trifles because that astrologie hath nothinge els but meere trifles, poetes fables, and monstrous fayninges, with which they have imagined that the Heaven is aboundantly replenished.' In reading

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this very ingenuous confession it is only fair to Agrippa to remember that he openly dissuaded his patrons from endeavouring by this means to pry into the secrets of the future, and was met by the request to declare what the voices of the stars said, and not to pronounce on their truth or falsehood. Of judicial astrology he remarks: 'This Arte is nothing els but a false conjecture of superstitious parsons, which thorow long practise, have made a science of things uncertaine.' In estimating the ocasional success of astrological predictions Agrippa manifests a degree of common-sense which was then probably unusual. 'If perchaunce fortune doo agree with theire prognostications, that emonge so many doubtfull matters there shall some truthe or other fall out, it is a marvaile to see how they lifte up their combes and how proudly they avaunte thereof.'[1] With regard to magic there seems a slight hesitation in Agrippa's tone, and his condemnation of it is not so absolute. He cannot deny that it has authority, both in the Bible and in natural phenomena which are clearly occult. Still he conceives that its range should be greatly narrowed, and sums up with the verdict that 'Natural Magicke sometimes enclineth to Geocie, and Theurgy,' and 'oftentimes it is entangled in the craftes and errours of the Devils of hell.' The Jewish Cabala was, as we have seen, another subject, which had in former years engaged Agrippa's attention, and on which he had lectured, taking as his text-book Reuchlin's 'Mirific word.' Now, however, he is persuaded that it is 'nothinge els but a certaine moste pestilent superstition, wherewith at theire wil they doo gather, devide, and transpose the woordes, names, and letters, dispersed in the Scripture, and makinge one of another doo unbinde the members of the truth.' If Agrippa's criticism is thus unsparing in the case of his own once-cherished convictions, we cannot expect much deference for the opinions and systems of other thinkers. He inveighs against the conflicting views of philosophers in the Skeptical vein of Sextos Empeirikos himself. For 'although philosophie disputeth and

[1] Among other examples of the inability of the stars to reveal the personal lot of the star-gazer, Agrippa quotes an epigram of Sir Thomas More, on the untrustworthiness of such stellar deities as Jove, Mars, Venus, in cases where their own sympathies might be supposed to be involved, *e.g.* when the astrologer's wife was unfaithful. Little did Agrippa suppose, in quoting the epigram, he was describing his own destined lot, for Rabelais ridicules him, in his character of Herr Trippa, as too intent on the stars to see patent proofs of his own dishonour, but with obvious unfairness, inasmuch as Agrippa had totally renounced astrology, and all cognate sciences, long before he married his third and only unfaithful wife. Comp. *De Vanitate*, chap. xxxi., and Rabelais, *Œuv.* iii. ch. xxv.

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judjeth of all things yet shee is certaine of nothinge.' He doubts whether philosophers are to be classed 'emonge beastes, or emonge menne;' for 'how shall they be accompted menne, whose reason cannot persuade them no constant and certaine thinge, but doth alwayes waver in mutable opinions, whose understandinge, doubtful at every matter, knoweth not what it shoulde hold or folowe, and that this is true we will nowe at large declare.' Whereupon he discusses at some length the variety of opinions which have prevailed among philosophers with regard to the number and duration of worlds, the nature and origin of the soul, the different parts of the 'metaphisickes or thinges supernaturall.' Moral philosophy has, according to Agrippa, principles as wavering and unstable as any other kind, . . . morality being dependent on 'divers use, custome, observation, and practise of common life, and is mutable according to the opinions of times, places, and menne. . . . whereof it cometh to pass, that, the whiche at one time was vice, another time is accompted vertue; and that whiche in one place is vertue, in another is vice.' Apropos of this argument, Agrippa remarks on the different manners and customs of races and nations as thus: 'The Italians have alwaies bene glorious in princely nobilitie; the Frenchmen fooles; the Sicilians sharpe witted; the Asians luxurious; the Spaniards bee preferred before others in prowde boldnesse of bragginge. Every nation hath a particular difference of his manners given him from above, by the which the one is easily knowen from the other.' This fertile topic Agrippa elaborates at some length in a series of contrasts between Italians, Spaniards, French, and Germans; *e.g.* 'Wee knowe, moreover, that the Italians doo bleate in their singing, the Spaniardes doo waile, the Germanes doo howle, and the Frenchmenne singe with pleasaunte tune and accente. The Italians be grave in theire talke, but craftie; the Spaniardes fine but glorious (*i.e.* boastful); the Frenchmen ready but proude; the Germans unpleasaunt but simple.' He lastly compares the various dicta of philosophers on the subject of ethics with the teaching of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, and concludes a remarkable chapter thus: 'All morall philosophie is false and vaine, not instructinge to the offices of justice, neither confirming the dutie and counsailles of man. Finally it is altogeather repugnant to Goddes lawe, and to Christe Himselfe, that the glory thereof is due to none other than to Sathan.'

But if all departments of human science are thus incurably afflicted with uncertainty, the arts and occupations of men are similarly vitiated by vanity and falsehood. From the Court downward all sections of society, according to Agrippa, are honey-

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combed by vice and insincerity. '*A Court*, for example, is nothinge els but a college of giauntes, an assembly of noble men and famous knaves; a theatre of most wicked waiters, a schole of very corrupt customes, and a refuge of detestable wickednesse. *Trade*, is nothinge else but lies, dissimulation, clowdes of wordes, deceytes, and open treason. *Treasourership*, *i.e.* Financial ministers, agents, and brokers, are a certaine theveish kind of men—rich through the fingers only, whiche they have so clammie like birde-lime, and beset with infinite crooked hookes, that all money how light soever it be fleeting, and sliding, and slippery like adders and eales touched of these doth stick faste, nor can easily bee taken awaye. Hunting and fowling are detestable artes, and unhappy strifes with many labours and watches to fight and exercise tyranny agaynste beasts. The art of war is nothinge els but a common slaughter and sporte of many—souldiers being nothinge els than hired theeves.' Nobility, admits our nobleman, has in every case 'had a naughtie beginning,' and its qualifications, as then understood, he summarises in these caustic terms. 'Finally, the sufficiencie of all gentlemen is herein declared: if they can hunte, if they have been damnably taught in disinge, if they shewe the strength of their body with greate quaffinge, if thei spende franckly and lustely, if they geven to pride, to excesse, and to all intemperancie, and enimies of vertues, doo forget that they were borne and that they shall dye. But they be muche more noble if this wickednesse shall descende from the Fathers to the childerne, and enter into them with greater authoritee.' Moreover, the ill qualities of 'nobilitee' are further shown by the analogy of nature, 'for emonge birdes and fourfooted beastes, none els have the Prerogative of Nobilitee but such as are not so envious (*i.e.* enviable or desirable), as hurtfull unto other livinge creatures and to men themselves: as Egles, Vultures, Fawcons, Hawkes, Ravens, Kites, Ostriches,' &c. So 'of trees there have been fewe or none accompted noble and dedicated to the heathen gods, but they which have been either barraine or bringe forth no fruite for men to eate.' Physic, of which Agrippa is also able to speak from experience, he describes as 'a certain Arte of Manslaughter, altogether servill . . . for that oftentimes and well near alwaies there is more daunger in the Phisitian and the Medicine than in the sicknesse itselfe.' His own medical practice consisted mainly in recommending simples, and he is severe on those who administer compound medicines, 'whiche with their monstruous confections make marchaundice of our infirmities, and caste lottes for our life.' Our Skeptic is not a whit more lenient to law and lawyers than to other professions and callings. Law is

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'altogeather made of nothinge els but of fraile and very weak inventions and opinions of men, which things be of all others the weakest, and is altered at everye chaunge of time of the State and of the Prince, whiche tooke firste beginninge of the sinne of our firste parent;' and he concludes with the opinion that 'Law and Justice dothe not so much depend upon the Lawes as upon the honestie and equitie of the Judge.'

You will now, I think, be able to judge of the spirit of the 'De Vanitate,' and the extent of its author's Skepticism. Some writers seem to regard it as the hasty utterance of a disappointed man, whose spirit was soured by the misfortunes and calamities of life. Agrippa was the Koheleth, they think, of the sixteenth century, and his treatise a long sermon on the text 'Vanity of vanities.' No doubt there is much of this feeling in his work. It is partly shown by the sweeping nature of his attacks, for it is not only human science but humanity itself that comes under his lash. He seems to regard all possible sources of human happiness with a cold, austere, half-puritanical glance. He takes umbrage not merely at the undoubted immorality and insincerity of his own time, but at the occupations and pleasures of men of every time. Like Timon of Athens, his final resolve would seem to be—

> Henceforth hated be
> Of Timon, man, and all humanity!

The same truth is also borne witness to by his style, which is characterized by moroseness and biting acerbity, such as only the bitter misfortunes of a life like his could possibly justify. But while I fully concede the existence of this misanthropic feeling, as well as its influence on the tone and language of his work, it seems to me to betray a feeling of even greater intensity, *i.e.* intellectual discontent arising from intellectual causes. The misanthrope is also the profound Skeptic. Not merely is every knowledge vanity because it is unsatisfying, and leaves those who have panted for it with lips more parched and yearning more passionate than before, but because it is *incapable of demonstrative proof.* Here, therefore, we no longer have the disappointed man, but the thwarted and frustrated scholar, the impetuous and eager searcher after truth who has loaded his wallet with what he thought were precious stones, but discovers after his weary labour that they are nothing but common pebbles. Underneath the feeling of a Koheleth or Indian Buddhist dissatisfied with existence we have the method of the Greek Skeptic, ruthlessly dissecting the different kinds of human knowledge, and unveiling the pretentious hollow-

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ness underlying each. In point of fact, the 'De Vanitate' may be summarily described by calling it a compound of the Book of Ecclesiastes and the works of Sextos Empeirikos.

Not that Agrippa was an openly avowed Pyrrhonist, or that his Skepticism was in origin or application purely philosophical; it was rather the weapon by which he sought to destroy all human beliefs in favour of genuine Christianity—the bridge by which he crossed from occult philosophy and Scholasticism to an unavowed but distinct Protestantism. The single reservation he made of all human arts and sciences—the sole exception to the vanity of the one and uncertainty of the other, was the Word of God. Here, therefore, we enter upon a peculiar phase in the history of Skepticism, or rather upon a particular application of Academic Skepticism, or the *Skepticism of Method*. This we shall find to be the prevailing form of scientific unbelief with the Skeptics still left on our list. They employ it as a general does heavy artillery on a battle-field, to clear the ground for the advance of their own forces. We shall have occasion by-and-by to consider this aspect of modern Skepticism when we come to Descartes, its most celebrated exponent. Meanwhile, I may point out that in the time of Agrippa it was the ordinary dialectical weapon of the age. Henry Stephen, the translator of the 'Hypotyposes' of Sextos, had employed it in the interests of humanism and culture, and to show his preference for Skeptical indolence as compared with dogmatic arrogance. Picus Mirandula had used it to overthrow Peripateticism, and so to make room for his own Plato-worship. Pomponazzi adopted it to dethrone Aristotle and Scholasticism in the interests of free-inquiry. But the weapon was not confined to philosophers: theologians also seized it, and, like a degenerate Southron brandishing a Highland claymore, their unskilful handling sometimes endangered their lives. Perhaps its use in the service and interests of religious dogmatism was not in itself quite legitimate, for in the mutual rivalries of religious as well as philosophical systems one must be overthrown before another can occupy its place. Skepticism was merely the destructive agency employed, and was in itself quite indifferent both to the old system which it swept away and to the new for which it made room. Hence we find it used for similar purposes by Protestants on the one hand and Catholics on the other. Agrippa, as we have seen, employed it to establish the paramount authority of the Bible, while Charron, Huet, Le Vayer, used it to defend the dogmas of the Romish Church. For a precisely similar purpose, Hervetus translated the 'Adversus Mathematicos' of Sextos—a policy as short sighted as that of the

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Britons in the old mythical story when they asked the Saxons to help them against their enemies, not foreseeing that the arms wielded on their own behalf might any day be turned against themselves.

How far Agrippa had advanced in the path of Luther and Erasmus is a question not difficult to answer. In his approach to the Reformers he was actuated by motives and principles which give him a place between these two leaders of the movement. His own spiritual needs and his stress on the Bible assimilate him to Luther, while his culture and love of freedom attest his intellectual kinship to the great Humanist. It is true he calls Luther a heretic in more than one place, but the opprobrious epithet is more than deprived of its sting by the accompanying reference to St. Paul's confession: 'After the way which men call heresy,' &c. His interest in the Reformation was doubtless quickened by the fact that it reflected the struggle going on in his own mind. We have seen that his intercourse with Dean Colet probably started him on the track of the Reformers, though he traversed it with a somewhat halting gait up to the time of his publication of 'De Vanitate.' This treatise is, however, in most important respects a Protestant work. Some of its chapters might almost have been written by Luther, Wicliff, or Calvin. The noteworthy chapter on the Canon Law (xcii.) *e.g.* not only denies the temporal supremacy of the Pope, but even his spiritual authority so far as it is not exercised in harmony with the spirit and precepts of Christ. Speaking 'on the Inquisitorial art,' he inveighs bitterly against the usurped tyranny of the holy office, and the practice of persuading men not with arguments of reason and Scripture, but with 'Fire and Faggottes.' His chapter on temples is an indignant protest, quite in the spirit of our own Wicliff and Bishop Latimer, against the unchristian practice of lavishing on costly buildings what should be employed to clothe and feed the poor—the true living temples of Jesus Christ. His remarks on ceremonies, holy days, and images go to the root of the common-sense, Christian view of those subjects. In short, Agrippa's Protestantism is a marked and genuine feature of his intellectual and spiritual progress. That it was scarcely acknowledged during his lifetime is easily accounted for by the unhappy preponderance of his twofold notoriety as a magician and Skeptic.

But while recognising Agrippa as a Protestant and Reformer, I must avow my own conviction that in some respects he was in advance of most of his compeers. His was not a narrow Protestantism. He did not wish to pull down the fabric of Romish

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dogma in order to erect a fanatical bibliolatry in its room. Christ, *e.g.* is with him the true Word of God, and he treats His utterances as if he conceived them to possess a sacredness and authority which he could not ascribe to other writers and portions of the Bible. Indeed, he expressly insists upon the human liability to error both of the Old and New Testament writers, *e.g.* 'that then whiche I saie that the holy writers have in some places after a certaine sorte been lyers, I will that it be understood not that they have willingly erred, but that either like men they have been deceived, or chaunging the will of God have revolted.' And further on, after enumerating some of the errors and ethical demerits of biblical characters, he continues: 'Hereof it commeth to passe that all the prophetes and writers in some thinges appear lyers according to the Scripture that saithe, every man is a liar.[1] But Christe alone, God and man, was never founde, nor shal be founde a liar, neither shall his wordes be chaunged or faile, who onely is without lie and error, as he hath said, "Heaven and earth shal perish, but my woordes shal not perishe."' Moreover, he alludes in other places to the doubts respecting certain of the books of the Bible which have always existed in the Church.

On the whole, then, it would seem that the final bent of Agrippa's convictions was in the direction of the simple teaching of Jesus Christ, and the importance of faith and morality as opposed to ritual. Against the interminable controversies of the Schoolmen he uses the argument of St. Paul, 'The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life;' and he treats the niceties and abstruse refinements of ecclesiastical dogmas with a mixture of good sense and a genuine appreciation of the essentials of Christianity which is not too common, even in our own day. Speaking of the misapplication of words he says: 'What greate contention have these two little woordes, *ex* and *per*, raised betweene the Greeke and the Latin Churches. The Latins affirminge that the Holy Ghoste proceeded of the Father and the Sonne, and the Greekes saying that not of the Sonne but of the Father by the Sonne. . . . There are besides other damnable heresies among the Grammarians, but so obscure and subtile, that except the very wilie divines of Oxforde, and the Sorbonists of Paris had perceyved them with their percing eyes, and condemned

[1] 'Hinc contingit omnes Prophetas et Scriptores in aliquibus fieri mendaces juxta Scripturam dicentem "omnis homo mendax."' This is one of those inculpated extracts from Agrippa's book condemned by the Sorbonne in 1530. They are not to be found in later editions of the *De Vanitate*. Comp. D'Argentré, *Coll. Jud.* vol. ii. p. 88.

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them with their profounde judgments, scarcely any could beware.'[1]

But besides his relation to the great religious movement of his time, Agrippa has a connection almost as intimate with the accompanying secular movement of pure humanism, of which we shall by-and-by see something in our review of the Italian Renaissance, and which will also come before us as a French movement when we discuss Peter Ramus and Montaigne. Of this, Rabelais is the most conspicuous representative in the earlier half of the sixteenth century. The comparison between Agrippa and the great French humourist offers striking points both of similarity and contrast. They might be called the Demokritos and Herakleitos of the age: one, the licensed buffoon, laughing boisterously over the follies, controversies, the pretended knowledge of the time; the other, the grave and moody philosopher, equally convinced of the uncertainty and vanity of all things human, but deeming the fact more worthy of plaintive wailing than obstreperous mirth: both alike in love of letters, hatred of monks and monkery; similar, too, in their patronage and protection by cardinals and bishops, in their vagrant and irregular habits, and incidentally in the fact of their having both found refuge in the same asylum—the house of François Vachon, President of the Parliament of Dauphiné, where Agrippa died, and where Rabelais finished his 'Pantagruel.' Indeed, of the two, Rabelais was probably the greater Skeptic, though, in harmony with his intellectual character, his unbelief was of that vague, indeterminate kind which always closely approximates to when it is not identical with complete suspense;[2] whereas Agrippa's was a profoundly earnest

[1] 'Sunt adhuc aliæ Grammaticorum perniciosæ hæreses, verum tam occultæ tamque subtiles, ut nisi Oxonienses acutissimi Anglorum Theologi, atque Parisiensium Sorbonistæ, lyncæis oculis has perspexissent, magnisque sigillis condemnassent, vix aliquis posset præcavere.'—*De Vanitate*, &c., 'De Grammatica,' cap. iii.

[2] 'Ce n'est pas que Rabelais rie; mais il flotte,' is the judgment of Martin (*Histoire de France*, viii. p. 206), after a critical and exhaustive estimate of his various tendencies. The philosophic historian seems to think that the well-known last words of Rabelais ('Je vais chercher un Grand Peut-être') may possibly be founded on fact. At least they represent that mixture of *insouciance* and unbelief which were main features of his character. At the same time the words do not absolutely exclude another and opposite rendering; for a man whose dying declaration is that he is in search of 'a mighty perhaps' may be assumed to have found certainty in this life. Most of his critics, however, agree in ranging him among Skeptics. Rabelais's ridicule of Pyrrhonism, as represented by

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conviction, though a negative one. Rabelais under his priestly garb concealed tastes and aptitudes which were essentially secular; while Agrippa, the knight, philosopher, and physician, manifested qualities which indicate a natural bent for theology and cognate studies. Both cautiously desired a reformation, and like Erasmus hoped it might come from within. Finally, both by their works exercised no small influence on the thought of their own and the next succeeding age. Both recognised the dangerous, half-wrecked state of the Church, though, with a curious inversion of their ordinary characters, the priest does hardly more than laugh at the perplexities and superstitions of his fellow-sailors, while the layman and Skeptic points to a secure anchorage.

Summing up our subject, Agrippa's life, with its strange diverse and conflicting elements, affords a faithful picture of the sixteenth century. It is a reduced likeness or carte-de-visite of the state of Europe at the birth of the Reformation. The pursuits and interests of every class, from emperor and pope downwards, are there found reflected. Their occupations of peace and war; their studies and controversies; their beliefs and unbeliefs, their errors and superstitions, their hopes and aspirations, all the various seething elements, burning questions in religion and philosophy, convulsive movements in Church and State, are depicted on the small canvas of Agrippa's eventful career. Emerging with especial distinctness from the multitudinous incidents of the picture, occupying so to speak the centre of its foreground, is the fact of the period being a time of transition. The human mind is advancing from the darkness of the Middle Ages. The dawn of the Renaissance has attained its culmination, and the sun of the Reformation is already above the horizon. The century is bidding a final farewell to the past, and elate with hope is saluting the future. This Janus-aspect of the period is well marked by Agrippa's main works. The 'Occult Philosophy' carries us back to the preceding centuries; the 'De Vanitate,' both in its negation and affirmation, bids us look forward to a newer and brighter period: so that in his single life are included two epochs, each with its own distinctive characteristic. From this point of view Agrippa's Skepticism, even if it had been much more Pyrrhonian and suspensory

Trouillagan, proves nothing on the point, for it is well known that thinkers, both ancient and modern, who have favoured Pyrrhonism are by no means blind to the self-contradictions and absurdities to which it is liable, or may easily be made to appear so. A very useful work on Rabelais and his relation to the Free-thought of the sixteenth century is E. Gebhart's *Rabelais—La Renaissance et la Réforme*, Paris 1877.

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than it really was, would have been amply justified. It is the fitting expression of contemporary disintegration, and so far not merely a philosophical speculation but a historical fact. Rabelais mentions the prevalence of Pyrrhonism during this period. It would have been strange had it been otherwise. It was the only appropriate creed of an age of suspense, when old principles were relaxed, old standpoints were giving way, and the human mind, freed from the yoke of the past, was eagerly asking, What is to come next?

Of Agrippa's Skepticism in itself I need not say anything more. The evidence I have put before you will enable you to appreciate both its nature and extent. You will have seen that while in form it is both extensive and profound, it has a 'saving clause,' which ostensibly and to Christians robs it of many of the mischievous tendencies which might otherwise have been ascribed to it. On the other hand, I am convinced of its genuineness as well as of its primary origin in the intellect rather than in a momentary pique created by disappointed hopes and embittered feelings. What it may have had in the shape of literary prompting, except the Book of Ecclesiastes, I confess I cannot quite determine. The form of the 'De Vanitate' undoubtedly suggests the treatise of Sextos 'Against the Mathematicians.' They possess at least the common features of taking one by one the several branches of human knowledge and weighing them in the balances of acute and subtle reasoning. But there is no evidence that this portion of Sextos was known to scholars in the earlier half of the sixteenth century, though the 'Hypotyposes' are found in an old Latin MS. of the thirteenth century.

But if the literary parentage of the book is thus doubtful, its descendants, direct and indirect, are numerous and well known. Montaigne borrowed portions of it for his Essays, without scruple or acknowledgment; Sanchez probably knew it; while it was the mine from which Hirnhaim professedly drew both the inspiration and materials of his work 'De Typho.'

Agrippa's character is so clearly marked in his life and writings that a separate summary of it seems superfluous. That he was a warm-hearted, lovable man is attested by the affection of his friends and disciples, as well as indirectly by the testimony of his letters. At the same time he was hasty and passionate, though the bitter experiences of his life finally taught him the virtues of patience and self-restraint. In harmony with his moral character was that of his intellect, which was eager and impetuous. With men of this restless type death seems occasionally to bring their intellectual career to an abrupt and premature close. It sets the

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final seal on a man's speculations, no matter how rapid their transitions have hitherto been. It catches, like a photographic lens, the latest phase of the intellect, and fixes it in a permanent form. Agrippa died at the early age of forty-nine, after restlessly shifting his intellectual position from one extreme to another. Had he died twenty-five years before, the final 'set' of his opinions would have been altogether different. Had he lived twenty-five years longer, would his intellectual restlessness have taken a still further stride? Would he, *e.g.* have separated himself from the Church? Would he have shared the Socinianism of Ochino and other Italian Free-thinkers of the Renaissance? Would he have advanced to the complete Pyrrhonism of Montaigne? Such questions perhaps are idle. Let us be content to know that our Skeptic, after his intellectual wanderings, succeeds in finding an anchorage; that his negation ends, so far as religion is concerned, in positive certainty: and though no Pyrrhonist, he attains Ataraxia, for he has obeyed the Divine injunction, 'Come unto Me, ye that travail and are heavy laden, and *I will give you rest.*'

. . . . . .

TREVOR. I am glad to find, Harrington, that we quite agree as to the origin of Agrippa's Skepticism, viz. that it was mainly intellectual, and not that momentary ebullition of impatience, petulance, and discontent for which some writers have mistaken it. No act of Agrippa's life was more deliberate than his publication of the 'De Vanitate.' He kept, as you have told us, the MS. by him four years before he published it, which is to me a conclusive proof of leisurely and well-matured consideration. I am aware of what he says in his 'Apology against the Louvain Theologians' as to the licence generally accorded to a declamation, but much of that appears to me an after-thought. Besides, as a fact of psychology, I doubt very much whether, in the case of a vigorous, robust mind like that of Agrippa's, intellectual conclusions are either formed, or can be greatly modified, by the accidents and fortunes of a man's life. No doubt feelings of disappointment and disgust may impart additional bitterness to the conviction that 'all is vanity,' but the persuasion of intellectual uncertainty must be grounded on the reason.

ARUNDEL. As a general rule, I dare say you are right. Still, the dominating principle in Agrippa's career is not

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reason but faith. If I have rightly understood Harrington's paper, I should say that the landmarks in his course are—(1) mediæval superstition and devout Catholicism; (2) a transitory stage of rationalism and doubt; (3) Protestantism and faith in Christ. Hence Agrippa is another instance of the 'victory of faith,' and his Skepticism is hardly more than that of St. Paul's when he said, 'I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.'

HARRINGTON. No doubt that is Agrippa's conclusion, though he arrives at it by a somewhat hasty, not to say violent, process. I mean that an unscrupulous adversary, a modern rationalist for instance, might have applied to his ultimate dogma the Skeptical method by which he seeks to overthrow so many merely human certainties. Suppose, *e.g.* the question had been put to him, 'How do you know that Jesus Christ and his Gospel is the "word of God"?'

TREVOR. Agrippa would have replied, 'I feel that it is so;' in other words, he would have taken the high intuitional ground from which all evidential defects and discrepancies (like distant valleys hid in mist) are absolutely invisible. So that although his conclusion is different, his method is like that of Ockam, Pomponazzi, and many more of our Skeptics who assert absolute truth and morality. The unconditional affirmation either of the intellect or the feeling in such a case outweighs any amount of evidence. Besides, Agrippa shows a leaning, both in his occult philosophy and his Skepticism, to mysticism, which would make his adoption of *à priori* methods as a final resource all the more natural.

MISS LEYCESTER. I admire and pity Agrippa heartily. But I cannot agree with you in thinking his mental constitution so vigorous. I share Professor Morley's regret, that he did not openly break off from a Church with whose doctrine and practice he had so little real sympathy. The latter part of his life seems to me a melancholy conflict between interest and conscience—a 'house divided against itself.'

TREVOR. I think you exaggerate the extent of Agrippa's Protestant affinities. There are infinite gradations of disaffection and craving for more liberty both political and

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religious before the point of open rebellion is reached. No doubt Agrippa's sympathies were largely in favour of the Reformers, nor does he at all wish to deny the fact. At the same time there were grave and preponderating considerations of another kind which he could not resist—(1) there was his education and all the religious associations of his life; (2) his continual connection with and obligation to dignitaries of the Church, some of whom were distinguished by a breadth of culture which might well be called latitudinarian; (3) the fact that Protestantism, at starting, appealed rather to the popular religious instinct than to humanistic culture and learning. Besides which, the Romish Church did not present to Agrippa and his contemporaries that semblance of narrow uniformity sometimes attributed to it in contradistinction from Protestantism. Our studies have shown us the considerable diversity of opinion which might be found within her fold. Agrippa was perfectly aware of this fact, and in his 'Apology against the Louvain Theologians' (his most important work next to the 'De Vanitate') he dwells upon it at some length. He enumerates the theological eccentricities, to give them no worse name, which well-known doctors of the Church had once maintained, but which had been overlooked by subsequent generations of Churchmen.[1] His position was that of a liberal clergyman in the Church of England, and the apology for his 'De Vanitate' is, in point of fact, of precisely the same character as such a clergyman would naturally make in answer to a charge of heterodoxy. Lastly, he was only one of a considerable number of advanced thinkers within the Church, and did not perhaps realize how far beyond the rest his publication of 'De Vanitate' had in reality landed him.

MRS. HARRINGTON. But surely the storm of obloquy and indignation which he found excited by the book might have opened his eyes to his real position.

TREVOR. Not necessarily. Agrippa's whole life was spent more or less in encountering such storms. The fanatical monks raised a furious outcry over all his writings. The earlier were magical, the later heretical, so that Agrippa,

[1] *Opera*, ii. pp. 276–77.

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like sailors who have long been exposed to heavy gales, had probably lost the power of discriminating the measure of excess of one storm above another. He probably also shared the true scholar's regal disdain of the clamour of popular ignorance.

MISS LEYCESTER. I should have been glad if Charles had brought out in his paper more fully the curious correspondence between Agrippa's occult philosophy and the folk-lore of some of the countries of Western Europe. I remember, when in Germany, hearing of popular recipes and remedies, in vogue among the peasantry, which I should suppose had been actually taken from Agrippa's book.

ARUNDEL. You need not go so far as Germany, Miss Leycester. We have some of the superstitions described by Agrippa flourishing, I regret to say, at our very doors. I have in my own parish a man who was cured of a severe attack of rheumatism in the leg by wearing, suspended from his neck, the dismembered leg of a toad, the unfortunate owner of which had been left to go free; and in a neighbouring village I know a rascally impostor who, enjoying the rare accident of being born a seventh son, has made his fortune by 'touching for the evil.' It seems to me that the persistent vitality of these superstitions is due solely to the fact of their being popular. When I have attempted to expostulate with the believers in witchcraft, ghosts, &c. in my own parish, I am always met by the argument of the old ballad :—

> Awa, ye wrangling Sceptic tribe,
> Wi' your pros and your cons. Wad ye decide
> 'Gainst the 'sponsible voice of a hale countryside?

HARRINGTON. Well, we must not be too hard on these relics of the past, from which, after all, we ourselves are not very far removed. It takes two or three centuries for the ideas and beliefs of cultivated classes to percolate through the lower strata of society, and your 'rascally impostor' is not removed by much more than a century and a half from the time when our kings and queens touched for the evil, and when the ceremony was honoured by the presence of

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archbishops and grave statesmen taking part in a solemn religious service. I had a great-grandfather of Jacobite proclivities who was as fully persuaded of the efficacy of the 'royal touch' as he was of the truth of any miracle recorded in the Bible.

MISS LEYCESTER. For my part, I am ready to give up entirely every part of Agrippa's occult philosophy, excepting only the name, which I think should be applied to all our science and philosophy. Our science of the present day seems to me in its titles and claims too obtrusively transparent and positive. The only thing about it which is 'occult' is the modesty of its professors, or the admission of its inherent occultness, which is generally left in the background. Whereas Agrippa, in putting what is after all the essence of our knowledge—its partial nature and uncertainty—in the foreground of his treatise, seems to me much more manly and honest.

HARRINGTON. In other words, you would have our modern scientists call themselves Agnostics rather than Positivists. But the distinction is merely verbal; for the Agnostics confine their profession of ignorance to real or final causes, and the Positivists limit their certainty to ascertained facts and processes: so there is, in reality, a perfect agreement between them. Both claim knowledge where sensible phenomena and its manifest relations are concerned, both disclaim it when ulterior causes are in question.

TREVOR. I am not sure that your reading, Miss Leycester, of Agrippa's title is quite correct. He does not, I think, mean to say that all human learning is occult, but that the philosophy which he treats is hidden from the vulgar gaze, and he claims the merit of divulging it. Agrippa is, in fact, the Hierophant or high-priest of the sacred mysteries, and his title, therefore, is not an indication of humility, but a mark of the spiritual conceit which we generally find to be the characteristic of the genuine theosophist. . . . As to modern science, I do not in the least wish to defend any bumptiousness with which it can truly be chargeable, but surely the method of scientific inquiry from Bacon to Comte, which quietly puts on one side final

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causes as matters beyond our ken, is not only justified by the patent facts of the case, but is indispensable for any real advance in scientific knowledge. Agrippa's 'Occult Philosophy' teems with proofs of this. I need only remind you of that striking example which Harrington rightly called a typical instance of the metaphysical stage of science. Besides, if we only remember how much human energy has been expended in fruitless search after final causes, we can never again wish them back from the limbo of natural inscrutables to which modern science has justly consigned them.

MISS LEYCESTER. I do not at all want them back as objects of human investigation which are clearly beyond our reach. What I complain of is the tacit assumption of our scientists that they do not exist, or else their open plea of ignorance as a proof of such non-existence, and all I would ask is that both the real existence and undoubted power of such causes should be in every case duly and formally acknowledged.

TREVOR. But you see, Miss Leycester, if the existence of such causes were continually obtruded on our attention in matters of science, they might again come to be regarded as the immediate agencies of phenomena which we have now learned to ascribe to what are called secondary causes.

ARUNDEL. To return to our subject for a concluding observation: There is one point in Agrippa's career with which I, at least, heartly sympathize, and that is the nature of his final conviction. The termination of every intellectual career should be marked, I think, by the inscription, *Requiescat in pace*; and though I do not presume to find fault with any *bonâ fide* harbour in which the tempest-driven and doubting intellect of man finds refuge, it is only natural to value most highly the harbour whose merits we ourselves have tested. After all, the ship which has oftenest found shelter in the calm water of some land-locked haven, and has tried most frequently the quality of its anchorage, is best able to bear evidence to its security.

TREVOR. Very true. Yet we must not lose sight of the fact that there are minds so constituted as to be impatient of rest, and who would prefer an eternal battle with winds

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and waves to the seductive embrace of a land-locked harbour: such men, *e.g.*, as most of our Skeptics, or again, Lessing, with his repudiation of definitive attainment, or Arnauld, with his well-known reply to one who advocated rest: 'What, rest here? Is there not eternity to rest in?' . . . . . (After a short pause, Dr. Trevor continued.)

Here then we bring to a conclusion our first series of 'Evenings with the Skeptics.' Our philosophical enterprise, though undertaken somewhat hastily, has not been unproductive of a considerable amount of intellectual interest and profit. Of course it has also involved some labour, not that I can claim merit for my own share of the work, for the materials of all my papers had long lain by me, and all I had to do was to sift and arrange. But we are fully agreed that the task was worth the labour entailed, and that one effect of it has been to shorten considerably for us the dull season of winter. We may also be said to have conformed to fashion by this method of spending winter, and that in one of two ways: 1, we can allege with some expenditure of metaphor that we have spent our winter abroad, in Greece, India, Palestine, Italy, and Southern France—all of these being well known 'winter resorts,' adapted, moreover, as we have employed them, for intellectual, no less than in the usual manner for physical, valetudinarians. Or, 2, winter being the time consecrated in English country houses to the duties of hospitality, we may boast of having entertained, cross-examined, and conversed largely and familiarly with some of the noblest among the truth-seekers of antiquity. Parmenides and Athenagoras have been with us. We have sat at the feet of Sokrates, and have experienced the torpedo-shock of his 'Elenchus.' The later thinkers of Greek philosophy have been in and out among us as if our lonely Wiltshire valley had been suddenly transformed into the famous Academe with its olive plantations. We have also heard the teachings of Job and Koheleth, of Kapila and Sakya Muni. We have had the hallowed presence of Jesus Christ, and by personal communication with some of the most distinguished among His followers have learned their appreciation of Christian freedom as opposed to ecclesias-

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ticism. From Ockam, Raymund of Sabieude, and Agrippa we have acquired other lessons and incentives to Free-thought. . . . When the shortening days of next autumn come upon us, when our ripened corn-fields are divested of their golden robes, when our chalky lanes are besprinkled with fallen leaves, and when the shadows of the downs stretch far across our valleys as if they would measure their extreme width,—we will again take up our Skeptics or Truth-seekers at the Renaissance and try to ascertain what quota of thought and inspiration thinkers like Giordano Bruno, Campanella, and Montaigne have contributed to the intellectual freedom and enlightenment of Modern Europe.

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